

THORCAL

The Kingdom Beneath The Sand

ARTWORK G. ROSINSKI - J. VAN HAMME SCRIPT

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SCRIPT

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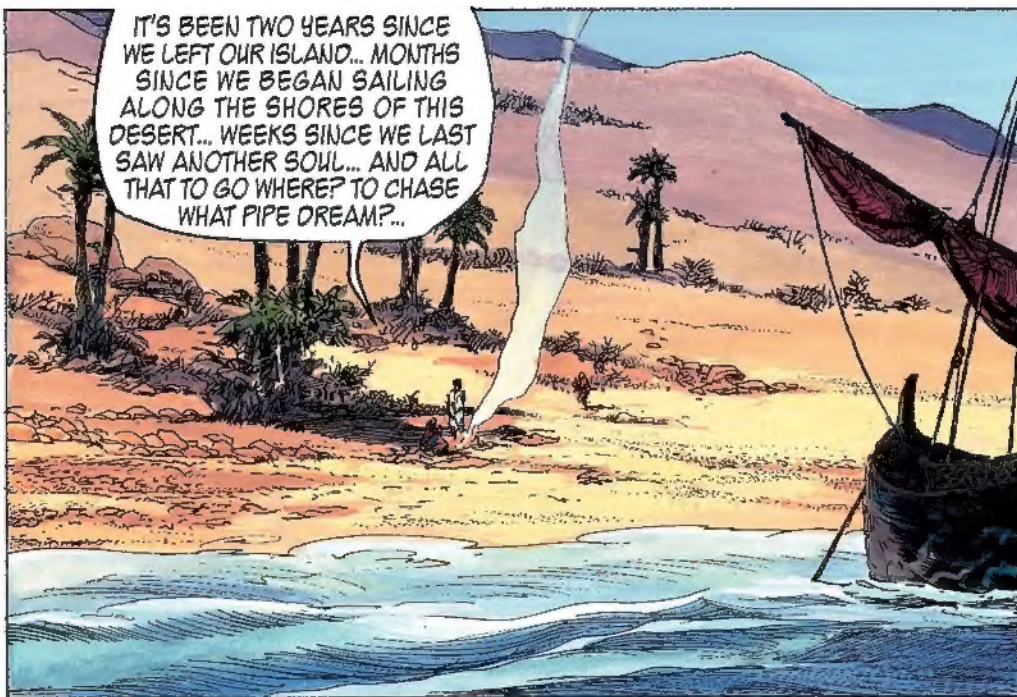
COLOURS: GRAZA

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I'VE HAD
ENOUGH,
THORGAL!



IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE
WE LEFT OUR ISLAND... MONTHS
SINCE WE BEGAN SAILING
ALONG THE SHORES OF THIS
DESERT... WEEKS SINCE WE LAST
SAW ANOTHER SOUL... AND ALL
THAT TO GO WHERE? TO CHASE
WHAT PIPE DREAM?...

YOU WILL NEVER FIND THIS PER-
FECT LAND YOU SEEK, MY BELOVED.
IT ONLY EXISTS IN YOUR DREAMS.
AND I WANT TO RETURN TO MY
PEOPLE. I WANT OUR CHILDREN TO
GROW UP WITH COMPANIONS OF
THEIR AGE AND WHO WORSHIP
THE SAME GODS.

THE NORTH IS
NO LONGER OUR
HOME, AARICIA.
I'M AN OUTLAW
THERE, AND YOU
WERE EXILED.

NO.

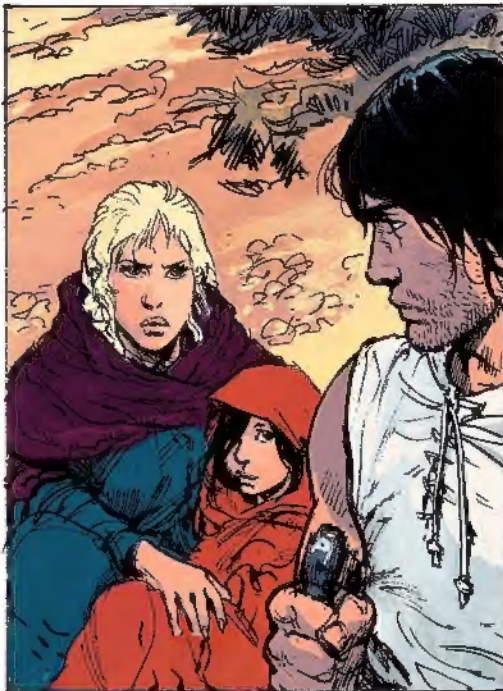
I TOLD YOU BEFORE, THORGAL.
GUNNAR, LEADER OF THE VIKINGS OF
THE NORTH, REVERSED OUR BANISH-
MENT. AND HE KNOWS YOU WERE
UNDER THE SPELL OF THAT ACCURSED
KRISS OF VALNOR.*

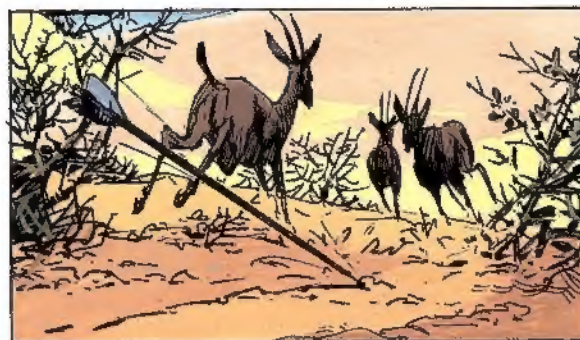
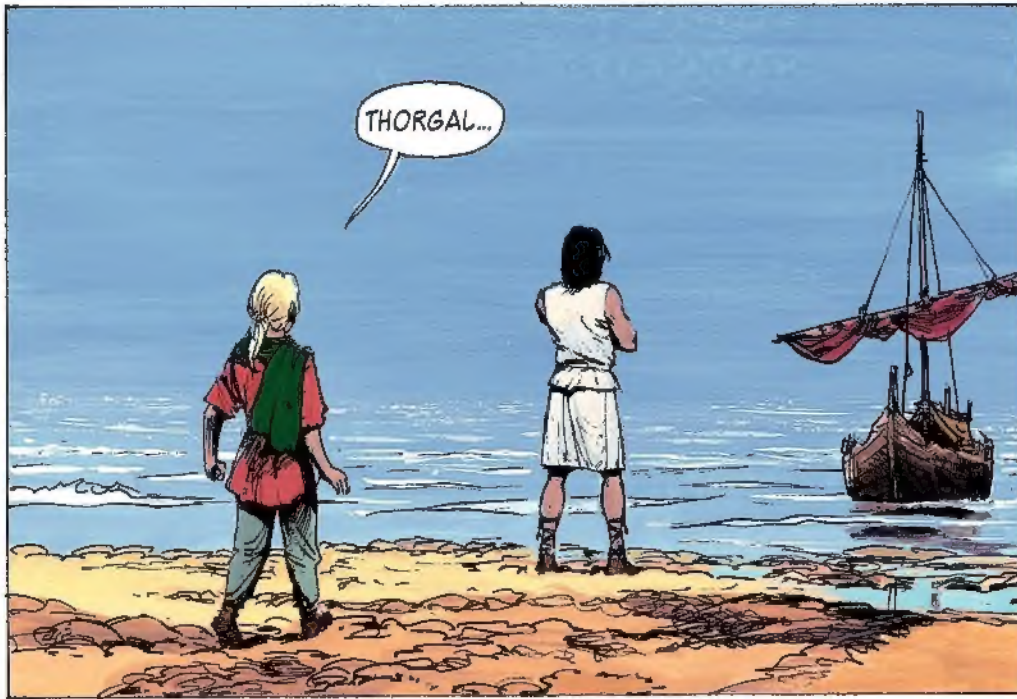


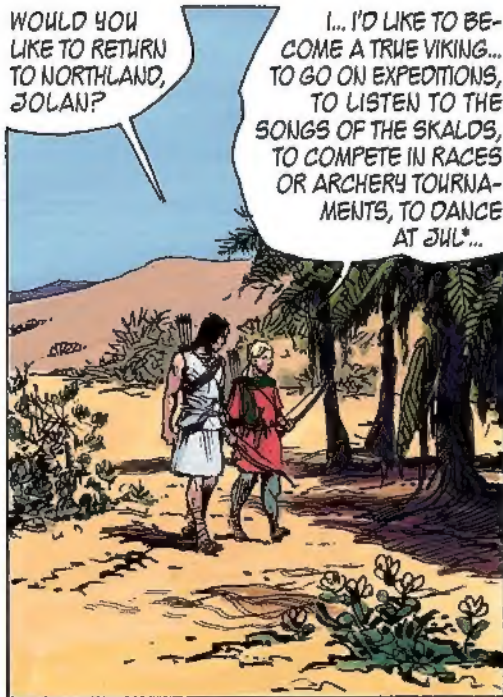
*SEE THE BRAND OF THE EXILES



IF WE WANT,
WE CAN GO BACK TO
NORTHLAND.

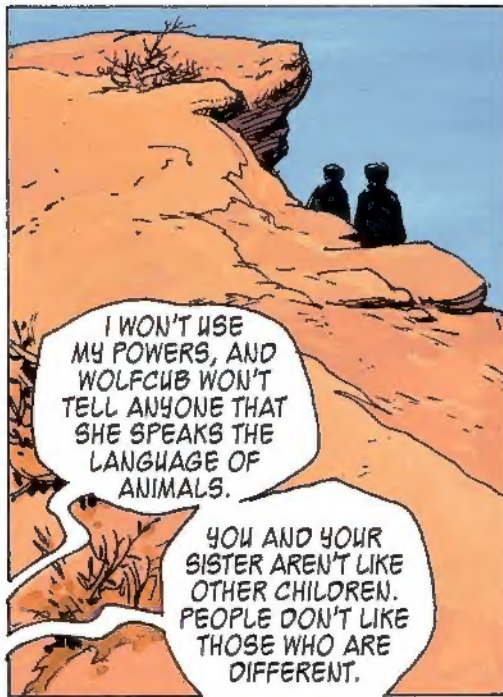






WOULD YOU LIKE TO RETURN TO NORTHLAND, JOLAN?

I... I'D LIKE TO BECOME A TRUE VIKING... TO GO ON EXPEDITIONS, TO LISTEN TO THE SONGS OF THE SKALDS, TO COMPETE IN RACES OR ARCHERY TOURNAMENTS, TO DANCE AT JUL...



I WON'T USE MY POWERS, AND WOLFCUB WON'T TELL ANYONE THAT SHE SPEAKS THE LANGUAGE OF ANIMALS.

YOU AND YOUR SISTER AREN'T LIKE OTHER CHILDREN. PEOPLE DON'T LIKE THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT.

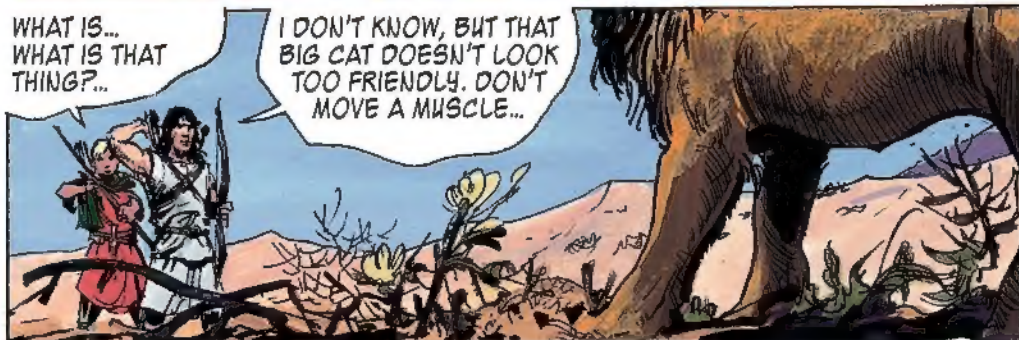


SOME DAY, THOSE YOU LIVE WITH WILL INEVITABLY FIND OUT. AND IT WILL HURT, BECAUSE THEN THEY WILL SHUN YOU.

THORGAL, LOOK...



?



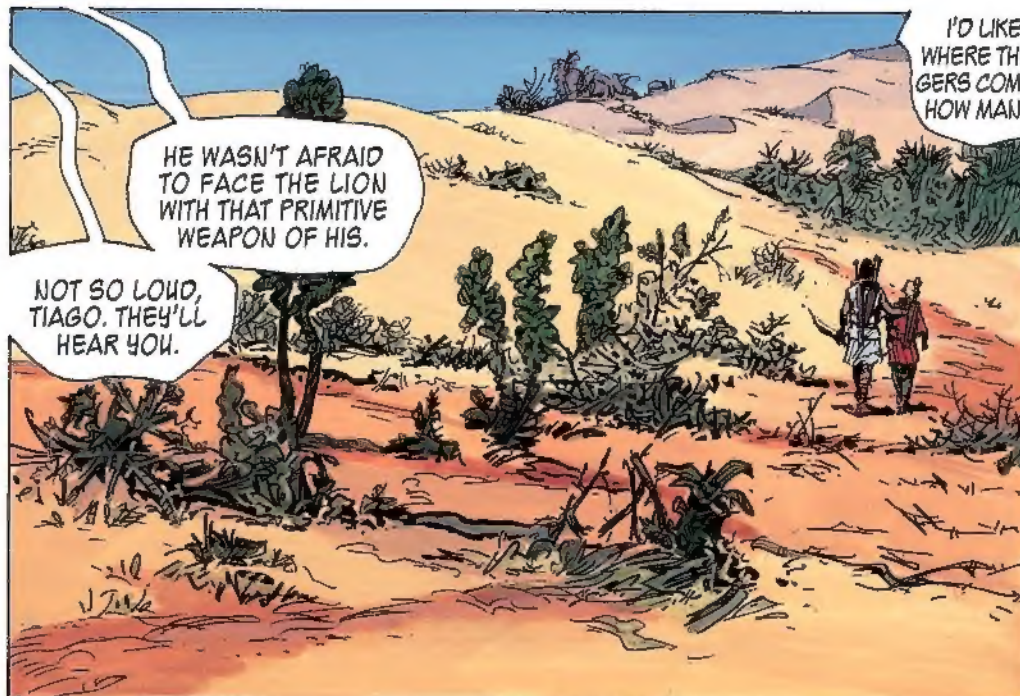
WHAT IS... WHAT IS THAT THING?...

I DON'T KNOW, BUT THAT BIG CAT DOESN'T LOOK TOO FRIENDLY. DON'T MOVE A MUSCLE...



DID YOU SEE THAT, CHRYSIOS!?

*ORIGINAL SCANDINAVIAN SPELLING OF YULE

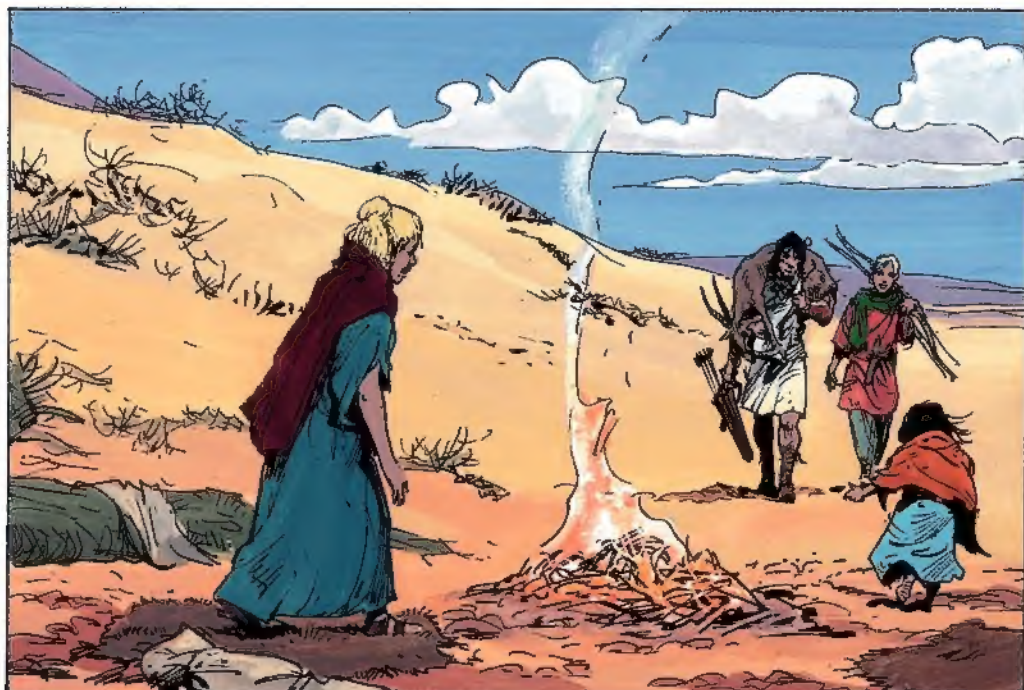


I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHERE THESE STRANGERS COME FROM, AND HOW MANY THEY ARE.

YOU WANT TO TALK TO THEM? BUT THE CONTARCH FORBIDS US FROM—



I KNOW. BUT IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE, THE YOUNGER ONE HAS FAIR HAIR. AND THAT WILL SURELY BE OF INTEREST TO THE CONTARCH.



YOU WERE GONE A LONG TIME. I WAS WORRIED.

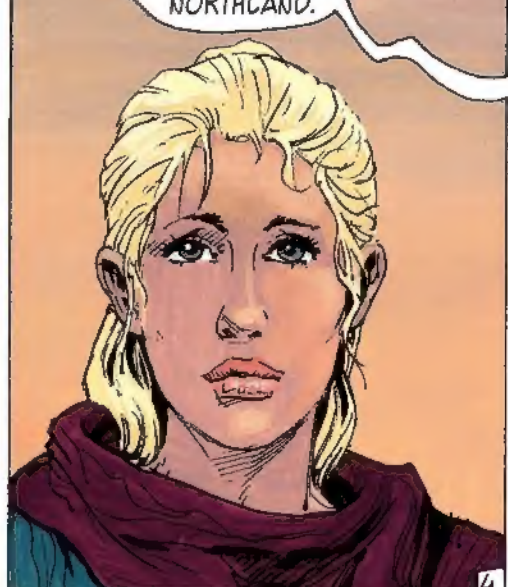
GAME IS SCARCE AROUND HERE. WE HAD TO WALK FAR.



I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, AARICIA. YOU'RE RIGHT. TOMORROW WE'LL TURN ROUND AND SAIL BACK TOWARDS THE GREY SEA.



IF ALL GOES WELL, IN SIX OR SEVEN MONTHS WE'LL BE IN NORTHLAND.





THORGAL, HAVE YOU SEEN...?

YES.

I DON'T SEE ANY WEAPONS AND THEY DON'T LOOK HOSTILE, BUT KEEP YOUR KNIFE HANDY - JUST IN CASE.



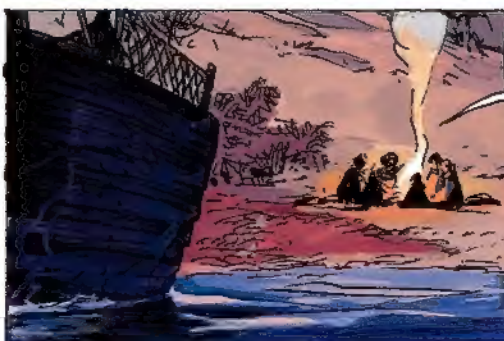
WELCOME TO OUR HUMBLE CAMP, STRANGERS. WOULD YOU CARE TO SHARE OUR MEAL?

WITH PLEASURE, FOR WE ARE POSITIVELY STARVING. A THOUSAND THANK YOUS FOR YOUR WELCOME.



ALTHOUGH, MEANING NO OFFENCE, IT IS YOU WHO ARE THE STRANGERS. WE CAME FROM A VILLAGE A FEW HOURS' WALK FROM HERE.

YOU'RE RIGHT. FORGIVE ME.



SO YOU COME FROM A LAND FAR TO THE NORTH, AND YOU'VE BEEN SAILING FOR TWO YEARS... IT'S EXTRAORDINARY! DO YOU INTEND TO REACH THE END OF THE WORLD?

WE WON'T BE GOING THAT FAR...



WE'VE TRAVELLED LONG ENOUGH. TOMORROW WE WILL BE TURNING BACK TO RETURN HOME, AS MY WIFE AND CHILDREN WISH.

AH...

IN THAT CASE, MAY THE WIND ALWAYS FILL YOUR SAILS. WE'LL LEAVE YOU IN PEACE AND SPEND THE NIGHT A LITTLE FURTHER AFIELD.

AND THANK YOU FOR THIS FINE SUPPER.



YOU SHOULD STOP BY OUR VILLAGE FIRST. WE COULD PROVIDE YOU WITH FOOD AND WATER.

MY THANKS, BUT WE HAVE WHAT WE NEED. NOW THAT OUR DECISION IS MADE, WE'RE EAGER TO BE ON OUR WAY.



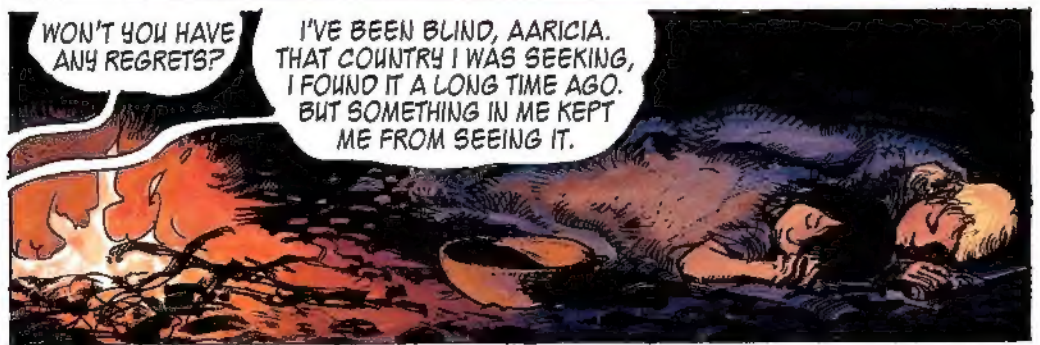
THORGAL...

YES?



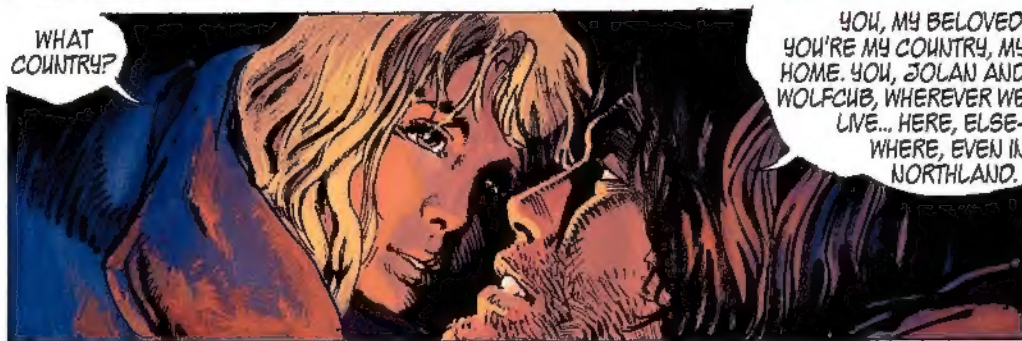
ARE YOU ANGRY?

NO. I TOLD YOU - YOU WERE RIGHT.



WON'T YOU HAVE ANY REGRETS?

I'VE BEEN BLIND, AARICIA. THAT COUNTRY I WAS SEEKING, I FOUND IT A LONG TIME AGO. BUT SOMETHING IN ME KEPT ME FROM SEEING IT.



WHAT COUNTRY?

YOU, MY BELOVED. YOU'RE MY COUNTRY, MY HOME. YOU, JOLAN AND WOLFCH, WHEREVER WE LIVE... HERE, ELSEWHERE, EVEN IN NORTHLAND.



FROM THE NORTH? FOR TWO YEARS?... WHAT IF THEY'RE LYING?

I DON'T BELIEVE SO. BESIDES, THE WOMAN AND HER SON ARE FAIR-HAired.



THORGAL...

YES?

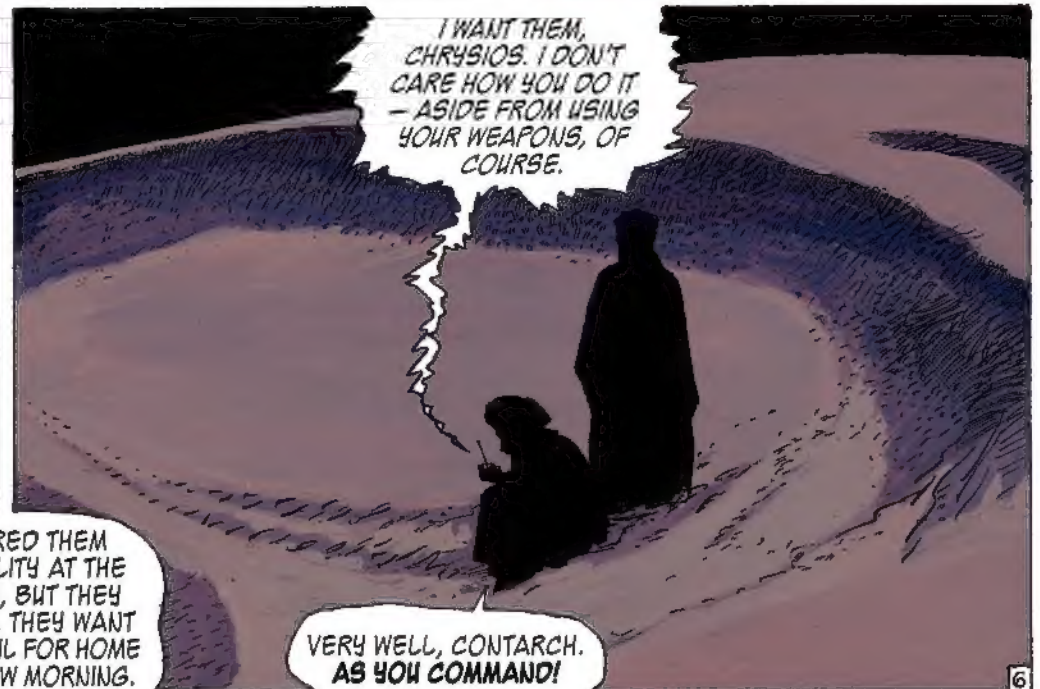
I LOVE YOU.

I LOVE YOU TOO, MY SWEET. MORE THAN MY LIFE, MORE THAN MY DREAMS...



IT WOULD BE A GODSEND... BRING THEM TO ME!

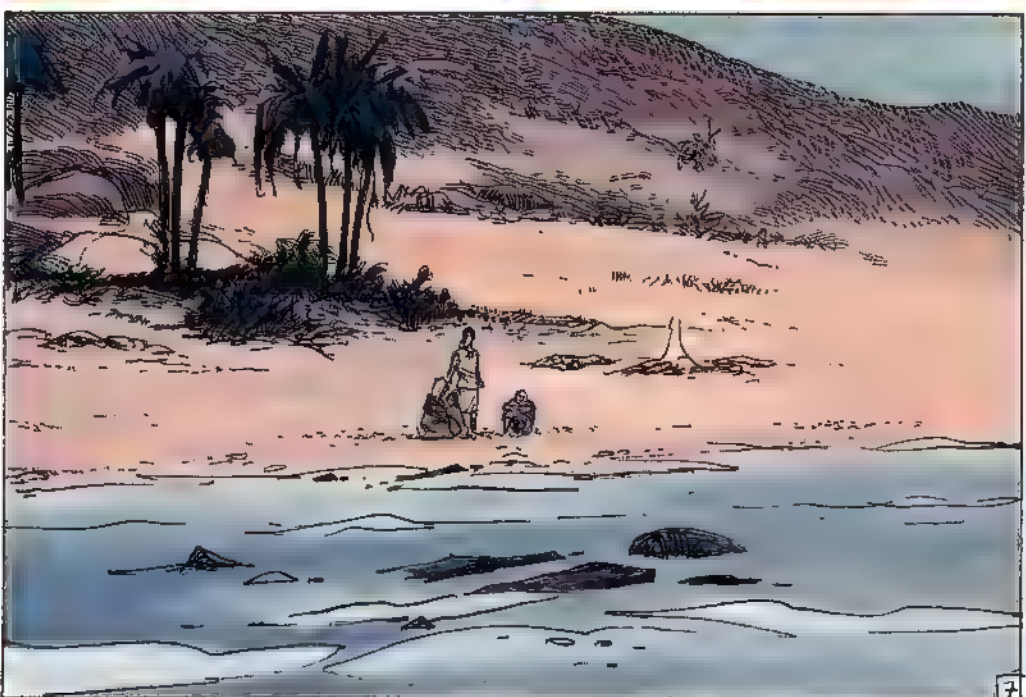
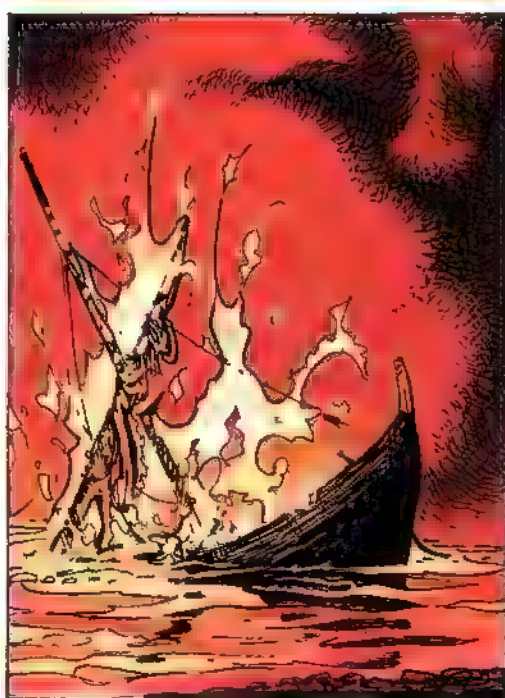
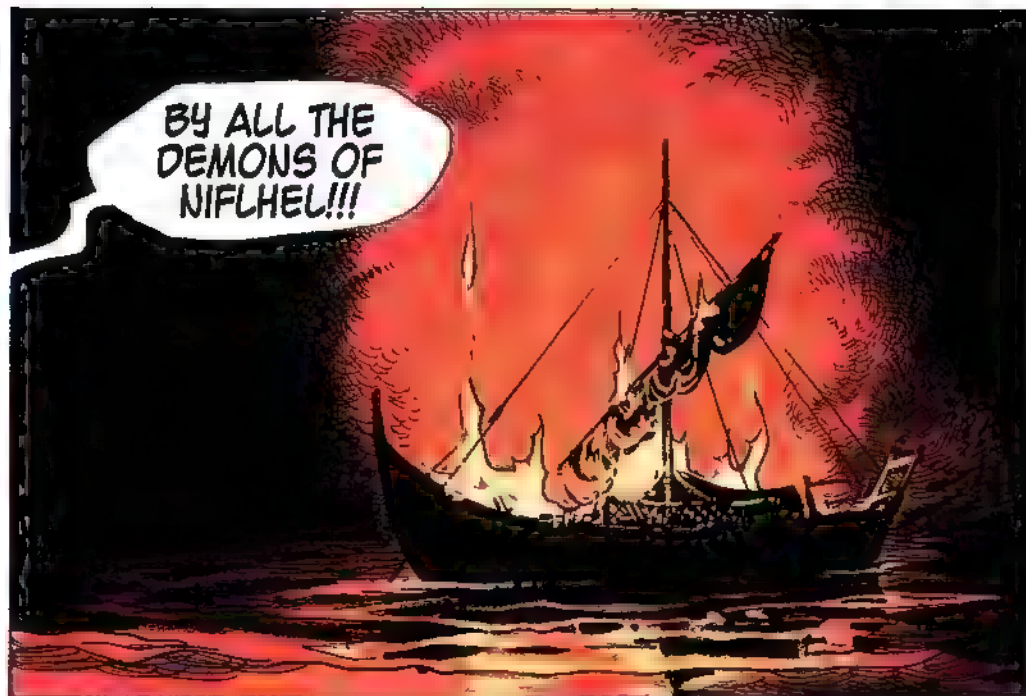
I OFFERED THEM HOSPITALITY AT THE VILLAGE, BUT THEY REFUSED. THEY WANT TO SET SAIL FOR HOME TOMORROW MORNING.

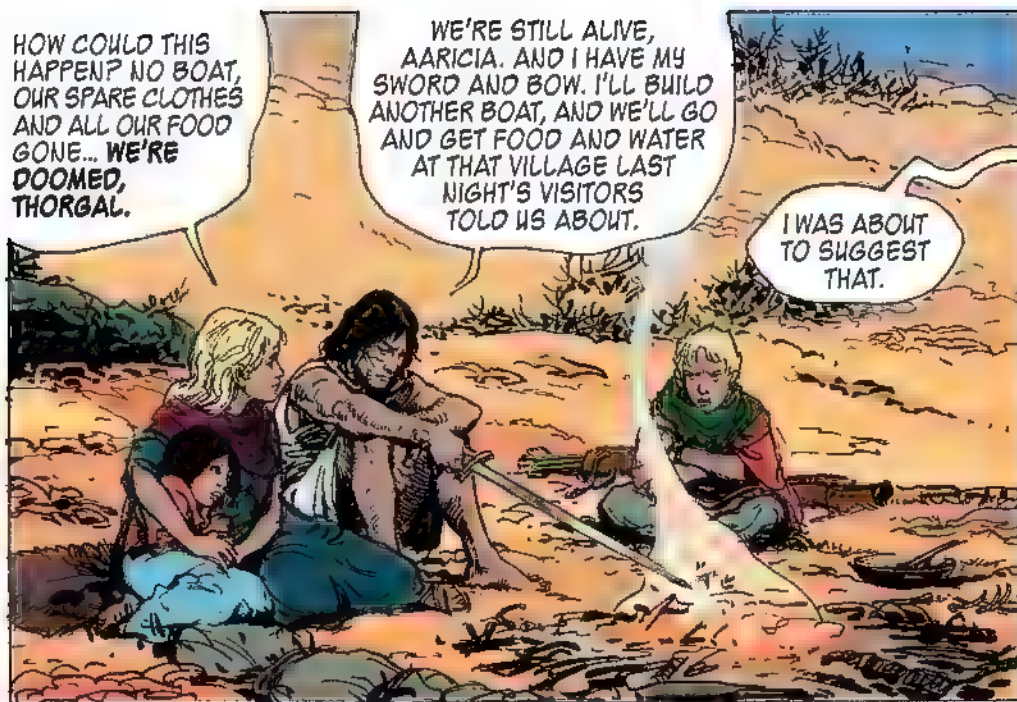


I WANT THEM, CHRYSIOS. I DON'T CARE HOW YOU DO IT - ASIDE FROM USING YOUR WEAPONS, OF COURSE.

VERY WELL, CONTARCH. AS YOU COMMAND!

6





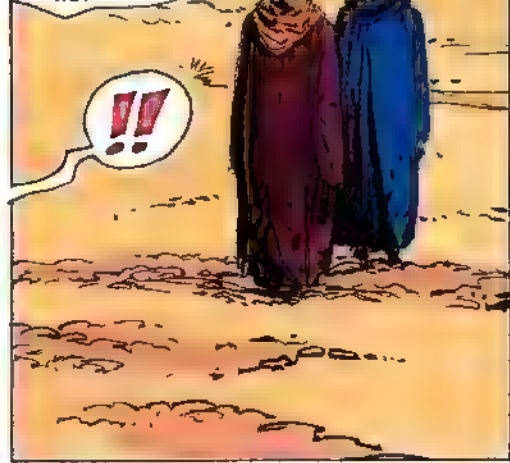
HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN? NO BOAT, OUR SPARE CLOTHES AND ALL OUR FOOD GONE... WE'RE DOOMED, THORGAL.

WE'RE STILL ALIVE, AARICIA. AND I HAVE MY SWORD AND BOW. I'LL BUILD ANOTHER BOAT, AND WE'LL GO AND GET FOOD AND WATER AT THAT VILLAGE LAST NIGHT'S VISITORS TOLD US ABOUT.

I WAS ABOUT TO SUGGEST THAT.

I DOUBT YOU CAN BUILD A STURDY CRAFT WITH WHAT MEAGRE SUPPLY OF WOOD CAN BE FOUND HERE. YOU'D BE BETTER OFF COMING WITH US.

WE'RE SORRY FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU.



SORRY?!... IT WAS YOU, YOU DOGS! YOU SET FIRE TO MY BOAT!

US?!? WHY WOULD WE DO SUCH A THING!?

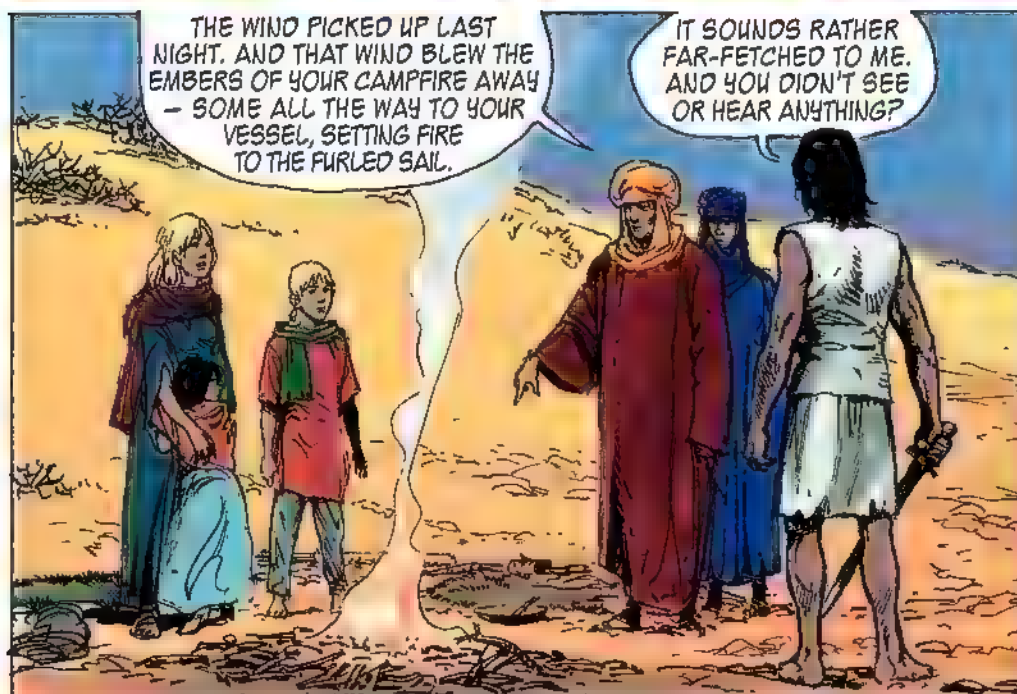


THERE WAS NO STORM, NO LIGHTNING. THE BOAT DIDN'T CATCH FIRE ALL BY ITSELF.

NO, TIAGO.

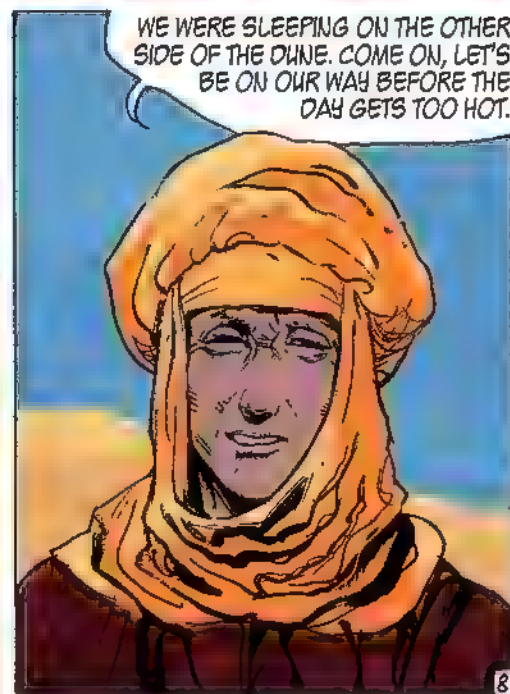


IF YOU'D CARE TO POINT THIS SWORD AWAY FROM MY CHEST, I'LL EXPLAIN WHAT PROBABLY HAPPENED, THORGAL...

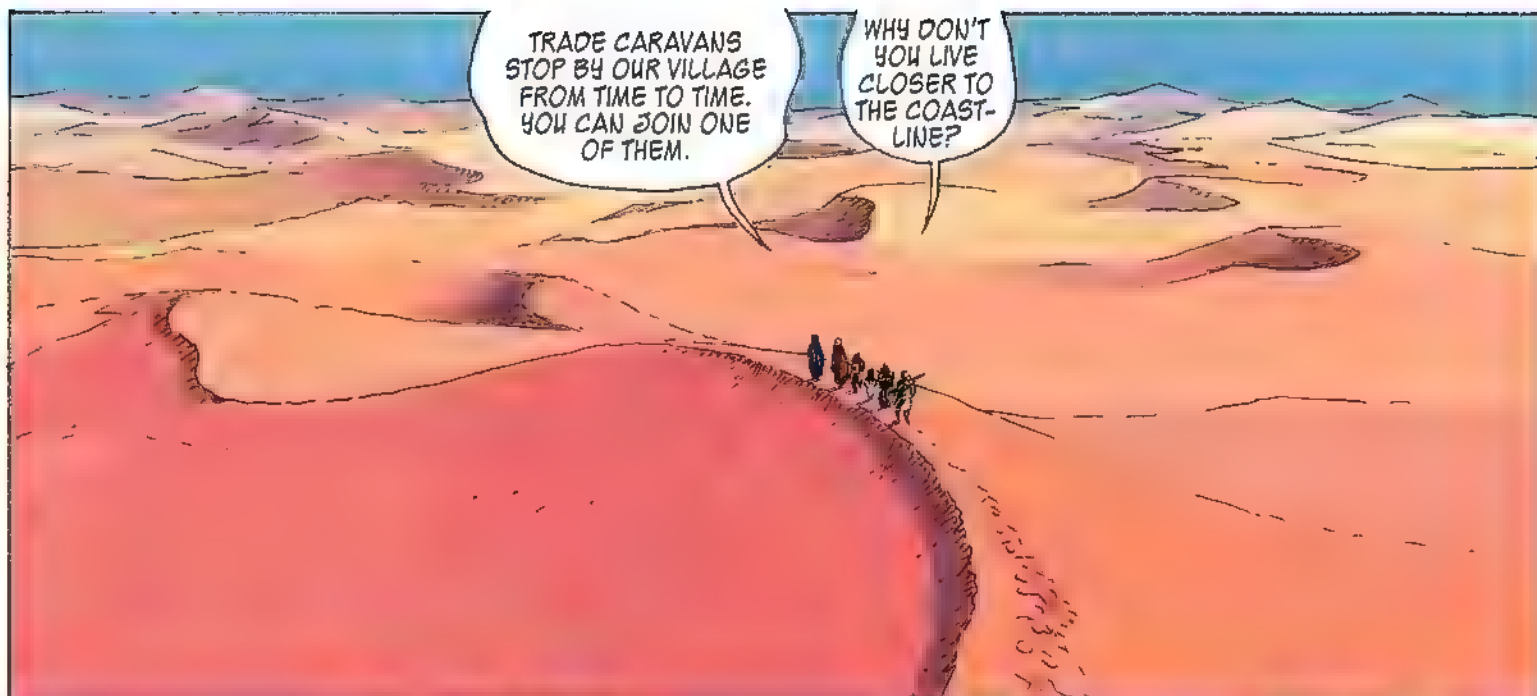


THE WIND PICKED UP LAST NIGHT. AND THAT WIND BLEW THE EMBERS OF YOUR CAMPFIRE AWAY - SOME ALL THE WAY TO YOUR VESSEL, SETTING FIRE TO THE FURLED SAIL.

IT SOUNDS RATHER FAR-FETCHED TO ME. AND YOU DIDN'T SEE OR HEAR ANYTHING?



WE WERE SLEEPING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DUNE. COME ON, LET'S BE ON OUR WAY BEFORE THE DAY GETS TOO HOT.



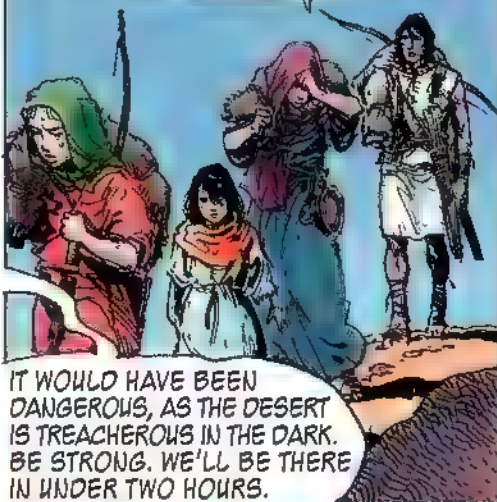
TRADE CARAVANS
STOP BY OUR VILLAGE
FROM TIME TO TIME.
YOU CAN JOIN ONE
OF THEM.

WHY DON'T
YOU LIVE
CLOSER TO
THE COAST-
LINE?

BECAUSE THERE ARE NO
SPRINGS OR RIVERS THERE.
AT BEST YOU'LL FIND A FEW
BRACKISH POOLS BARELY SUFFI-
CIENT FOR THE LOCAL ANIMALS.
WHERE WE ARE, THERE IS PLENTY
OF WATER NOT FAR BELOW
THE GROUND.



SHOULDN'T WE HAVE
WAITED FOR DUSK BEFORE
SETTING OFF? THE SUN
HASN'T EVEN REACHED ITS
ZENITH AND YET IT'S AL-
READY HORRIBLY HOT.



IT WOULD HAVE BEEN
DANGEROUS, AS THE DESERT
IS TREACHEROUS IN THE DARK.
BE STRONG. WE'LL BE THERE
IN UNDER TWO HOURS.

I DON'T TRUST
THESE MEN. THEY
LOOK NOTHING
LIKE THE FISHER-
MEN OR PEASANTS
WE MET BEFORE
IN THIS LAND.

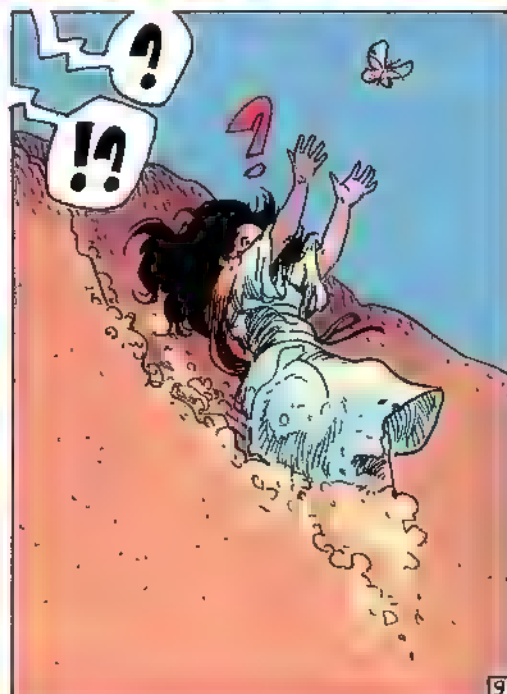


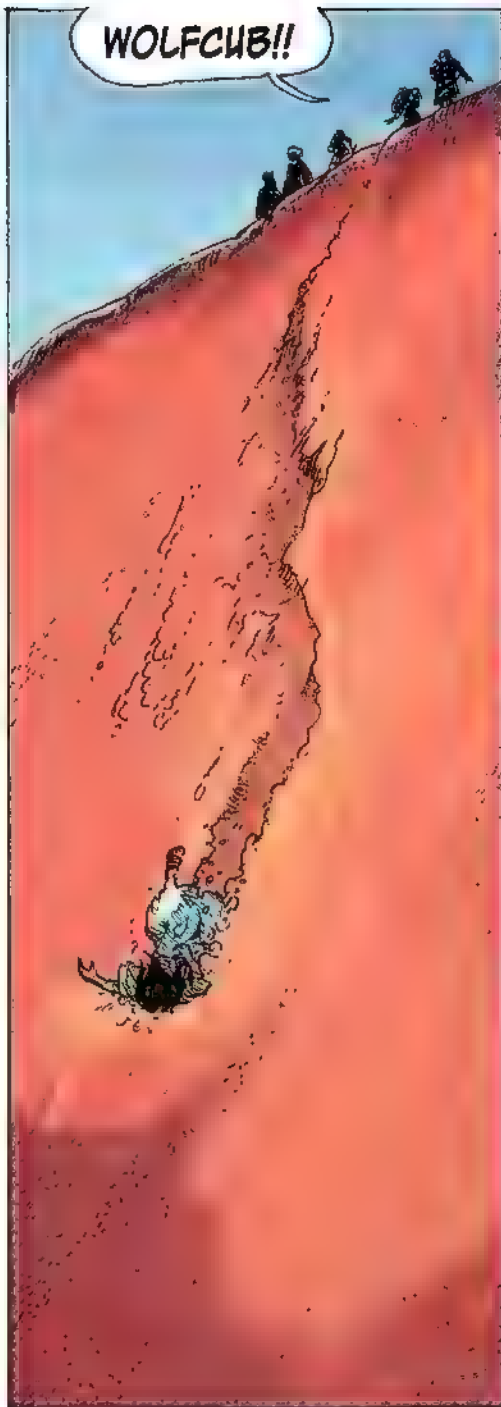
I KNOW.
DON'T
WORRY, I'M
KEEPING
AN EYE ON
THEM.



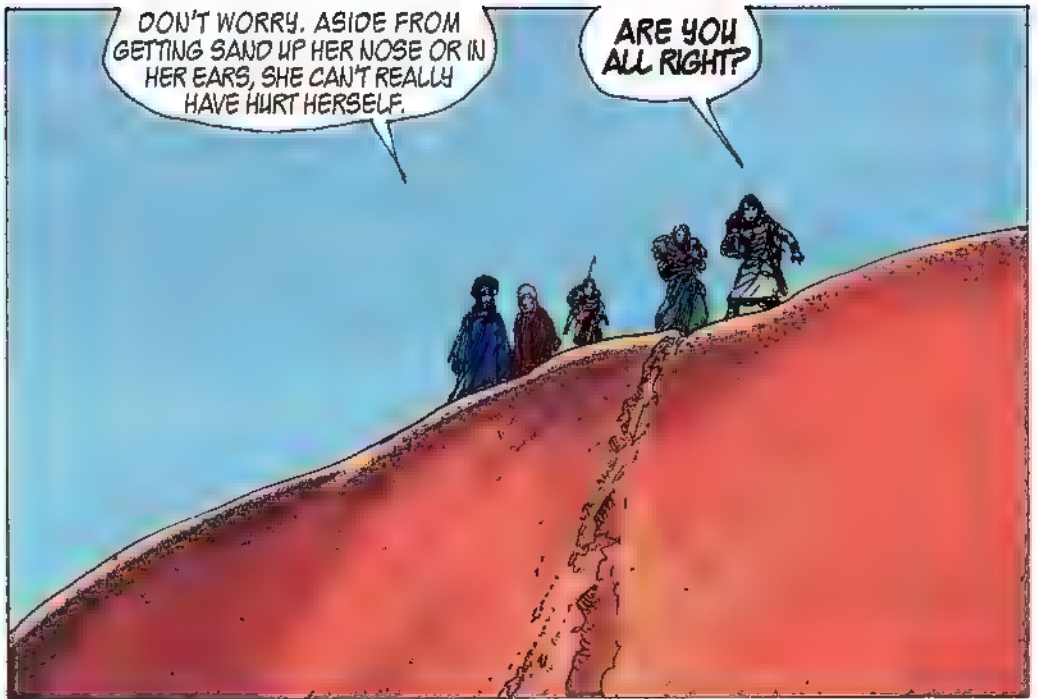
OH LOOK! A
BUTTERFLY!...

WOLFGU,
BE CAREFUL!



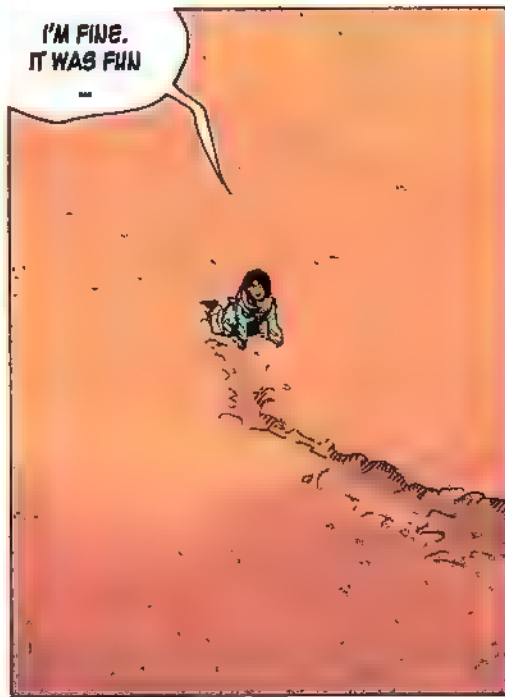


WOLFCUB!!



DON'T WORRY. ASIDE FROM GETTING SAND UP HER NOSE OR IN HER EARS, SHE CAN'T REALLY HAVE HURT HERSELF.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

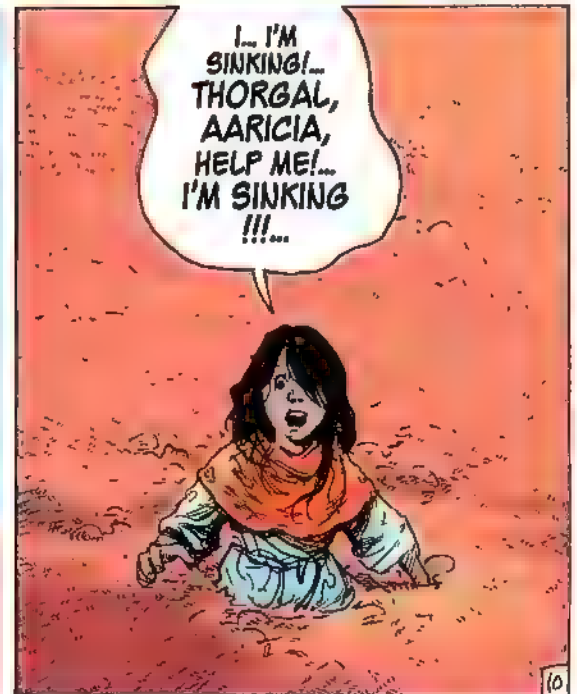


I'M FINE.
IT WAS FUN



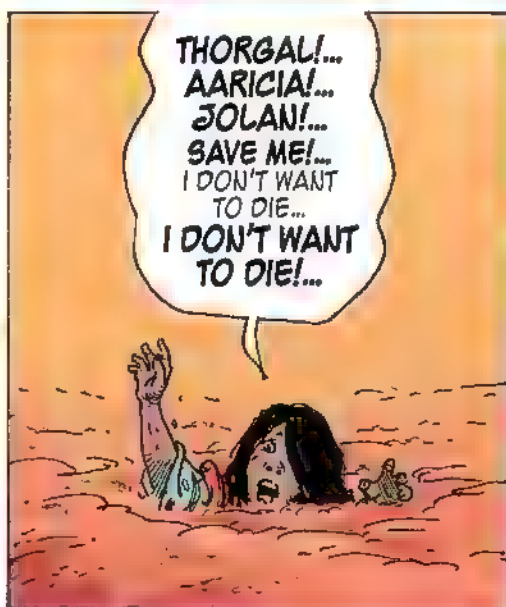
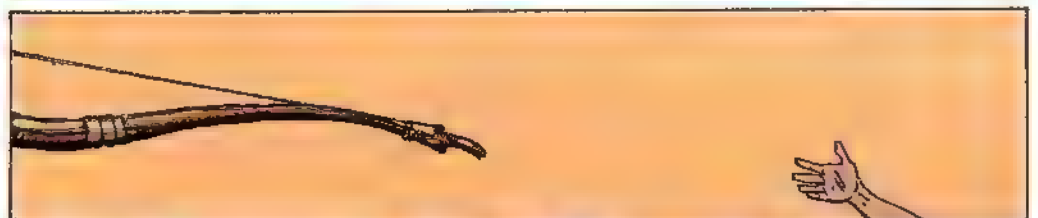
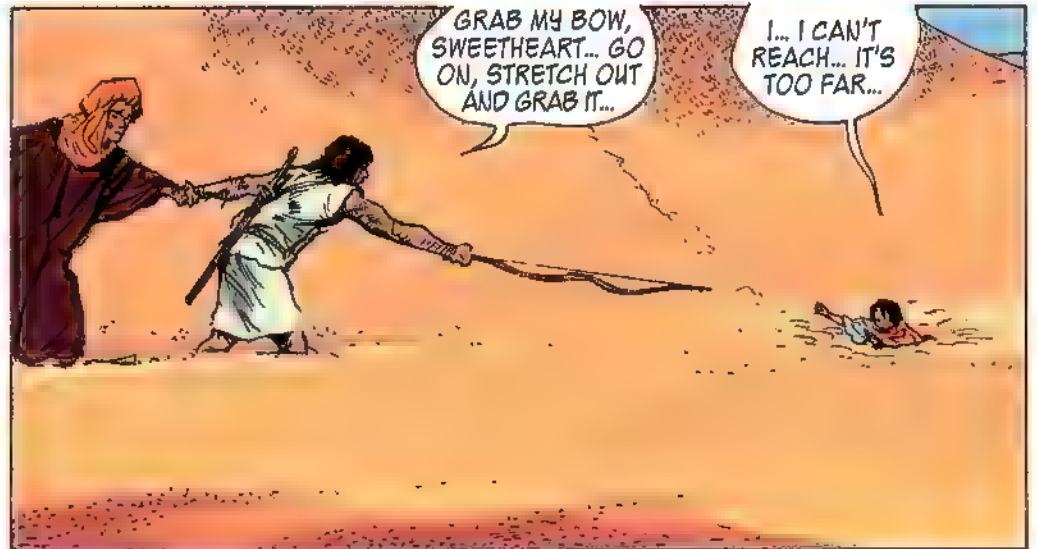
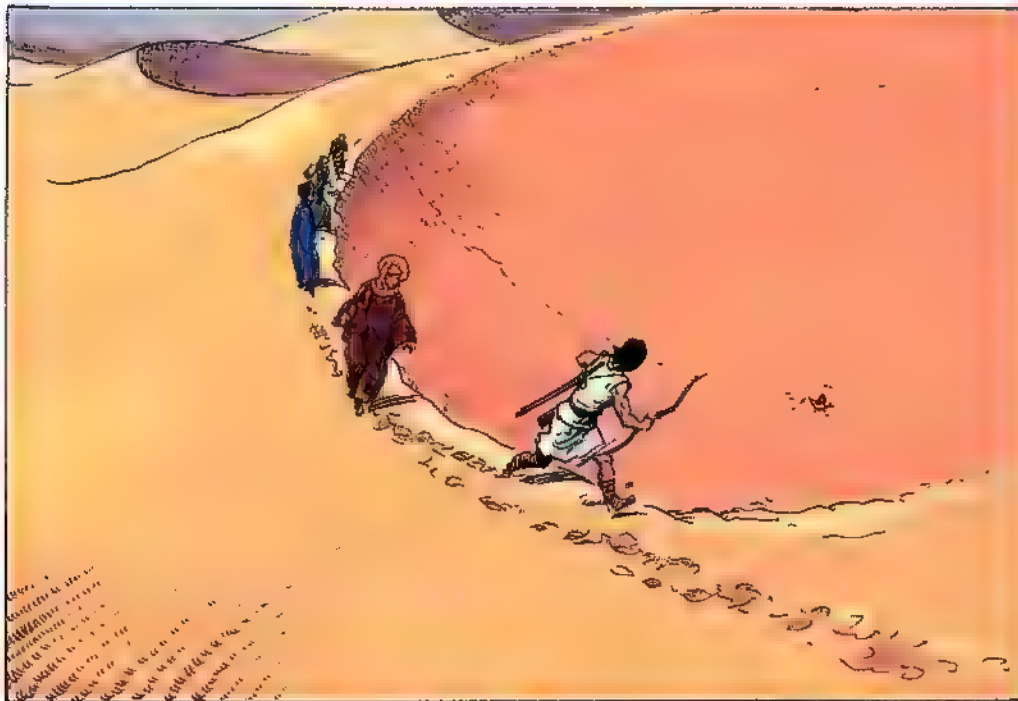
BY POSEIDON!
QUICKSAND!!

NO, DON'T GO
DOWN FROM HERE.
YOU'D SEND TOO
MUCH SAND DOWN ON
TO HER... LET'S MOVE
FURTHER ALONG!



I... I'M
SINKING!...
THORGAL,
AARICIA,
HELP ME!...
I'M SINKING
!!!...

10



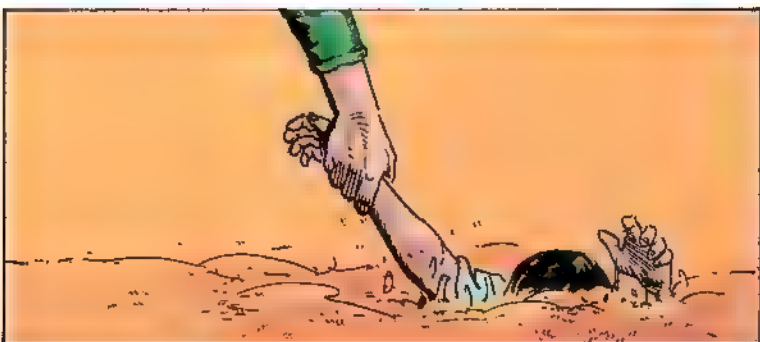
TIAGO, ARE YOU MAD?
YOU KNOW WHAT
YOU FACE...



YOU DO
WHAT YOU LIKE,
CHRYSIOS, BUT
AFTERWARDS!



AS FOR ME,
I REFUSE TO WATCH
THAT KID DIE
WITHOUT DOING
ANYTHING.

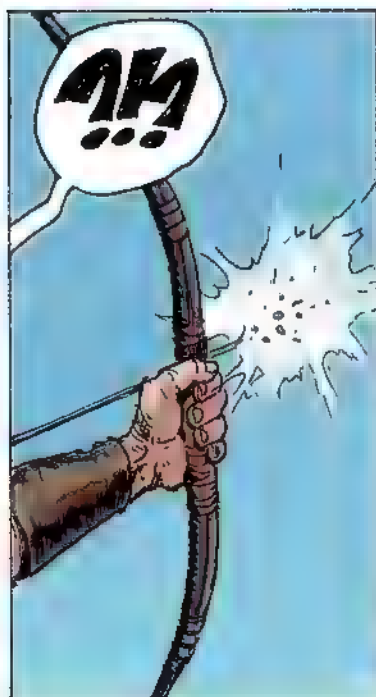


I DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHAT HAPPENED, BUT I'M
VERY GRATEFUL FOR WHAT
YOU DID, TIAGO...

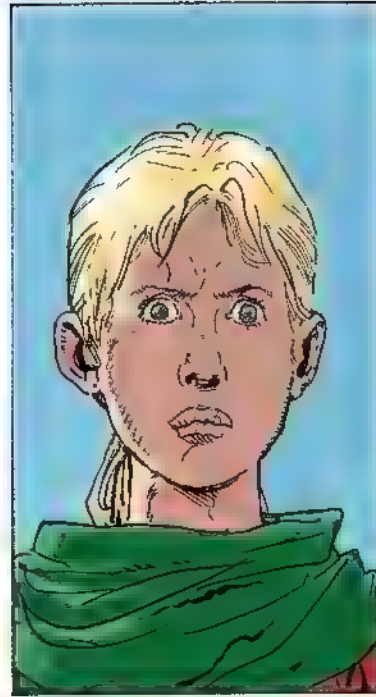


HOWEVER, BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER,
I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND
WHY YOU BURNED OUR BOAT TO FORCE
US TO FOLLOW YOU.

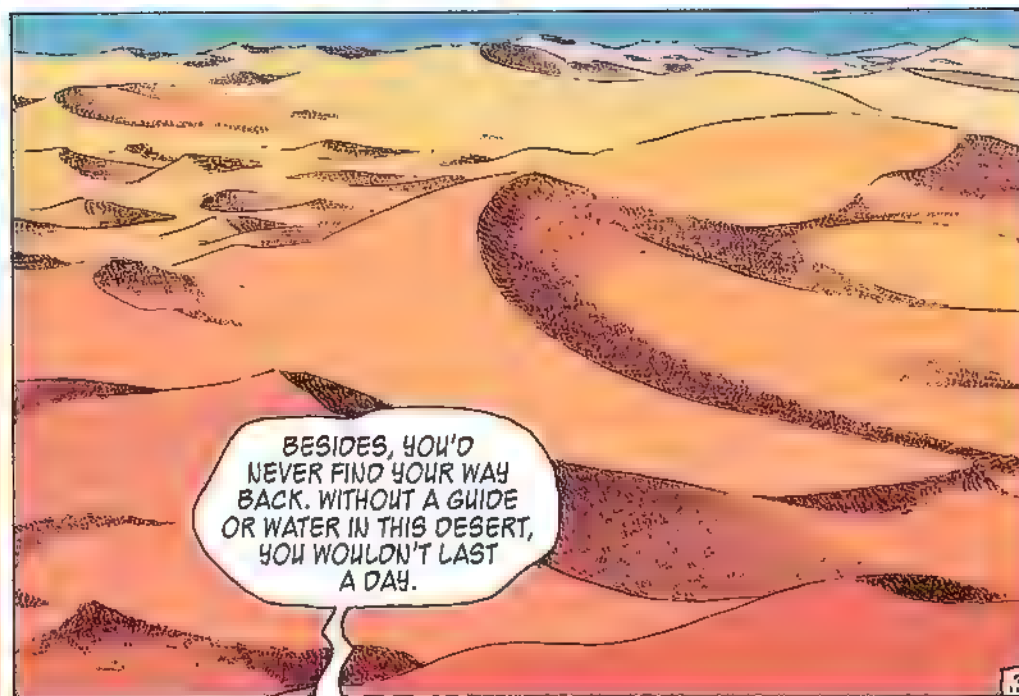


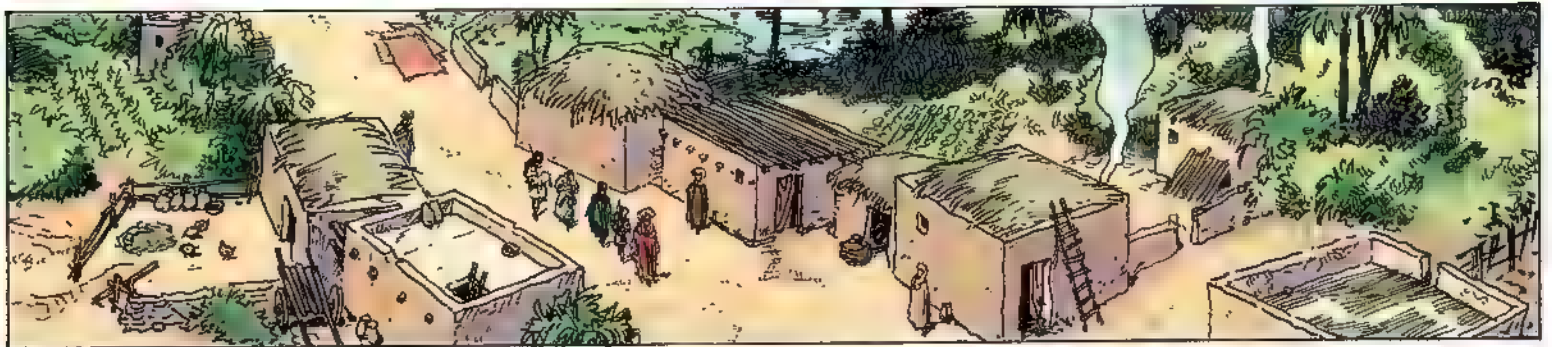
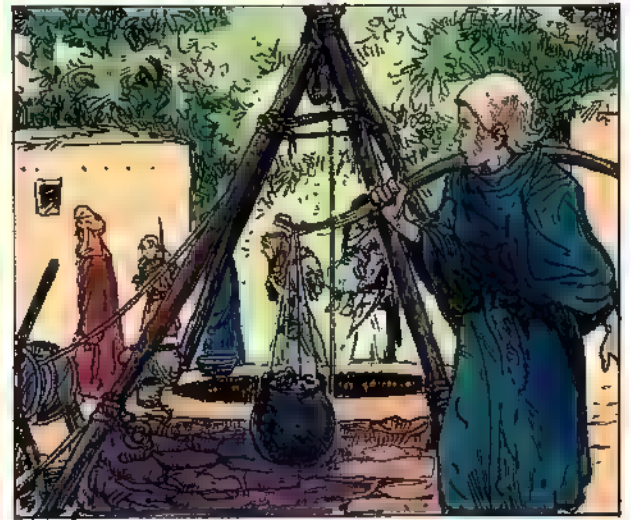
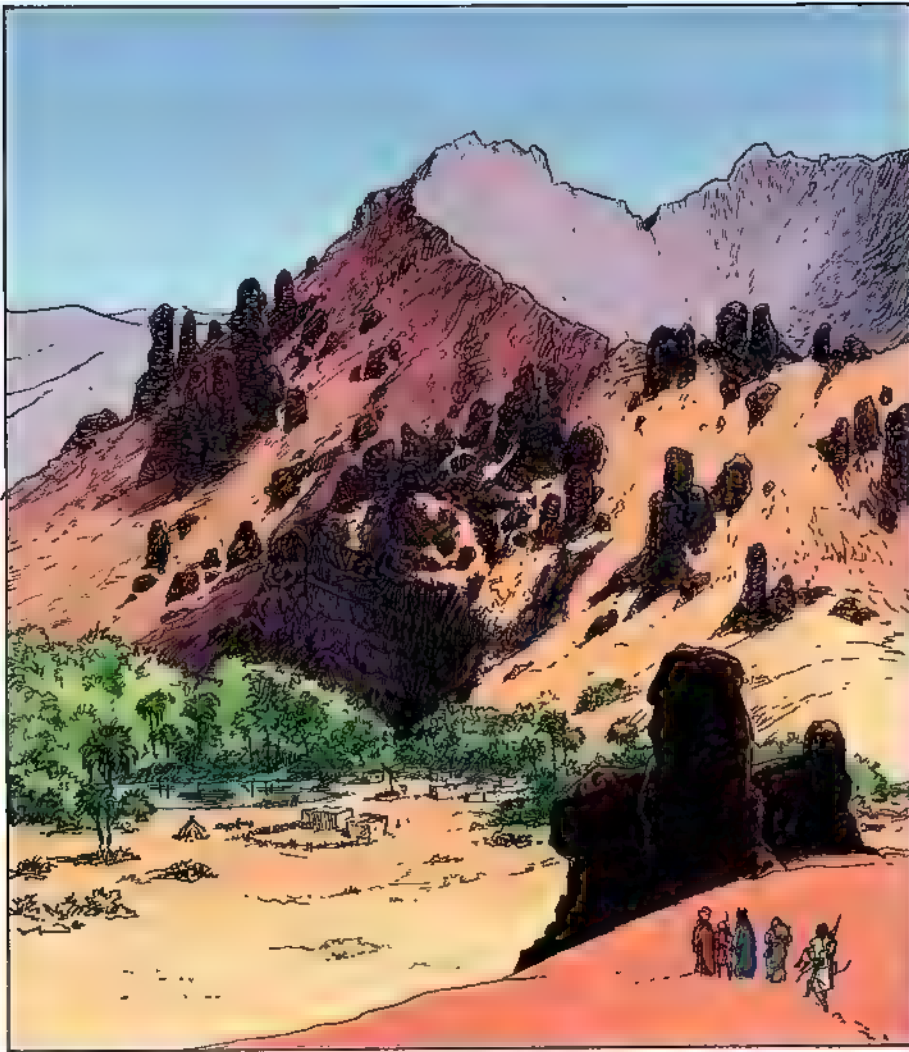


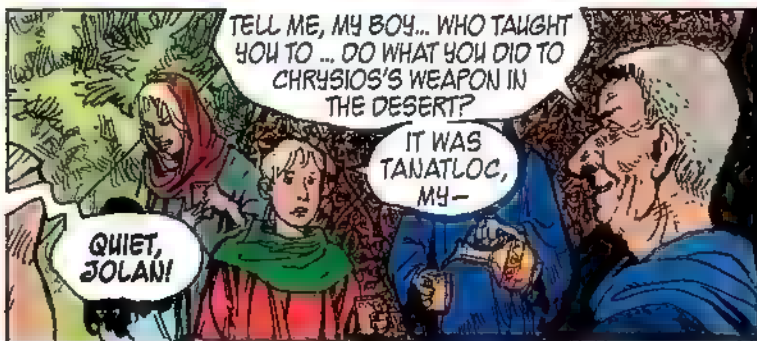
I DIDN'T WANT TO GO THAT FAR, THORGAL, BUT I WAS ORDERED TO TAKE YOU TO MY LEADER, WHETHER YOU WANTED TO OR N-



SO YOU CAN DIE OF THIRST BY THE OCEAN? BE REASONABLE, THORGAL. I PROMISE YOU WE MEAN YOU NO HARM.







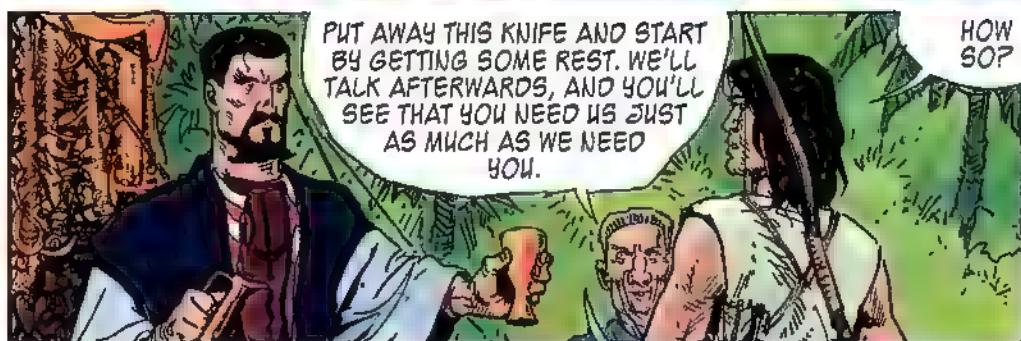


I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

IT'S VERY SIMPLE: I WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU. ALL WE WANT IS TO RETURN HOME.



AND HOW WILL YOU DO THAT? THERE IS NO WATER, SHELTER OR FOOD FOR HUNDREDS OF LEAGUES. YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WOULD BE HEADING FOR CERTAIN DEATH.



PUT AWAY THIS KNIFE AND START BY GETTING SOME REST. WE'LL TALK AFTERWARDS, AND YOU'LL SEE THAT YOU NEED US JUST AS MUCH AS WE NEED YOU.

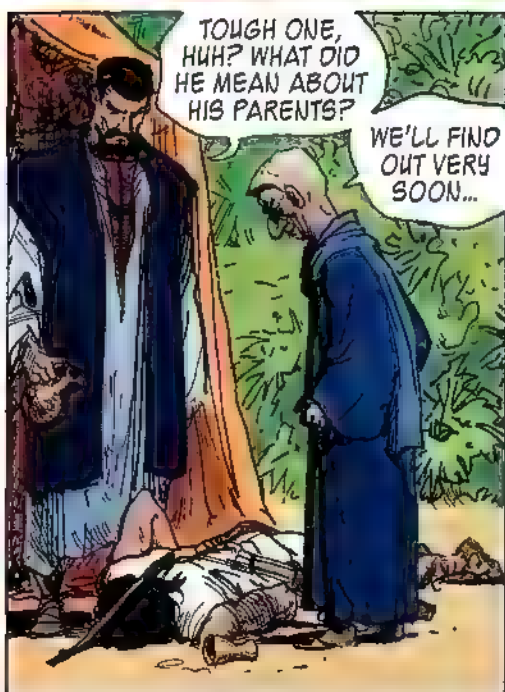
HOW SO?



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I... I...



ALL WE ASK OF YOU IS TO TELL US ABOUT THE LANDS YOU'VE TRAVELLED AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE. THEN, IF YOU SO WISH, WE'LL TAKE YOU HOME.



TOUGH ONE, HUH? WHAT DID HE MEAN ABOUT HIS PARENTS?

WE'LL FIND OUT VERY SOON...

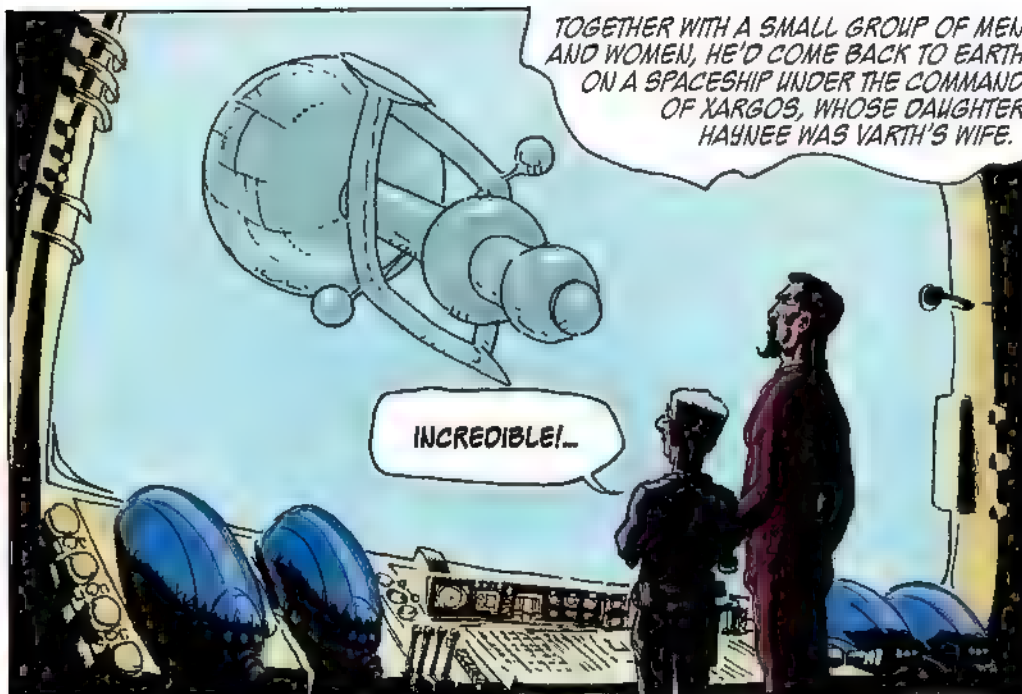
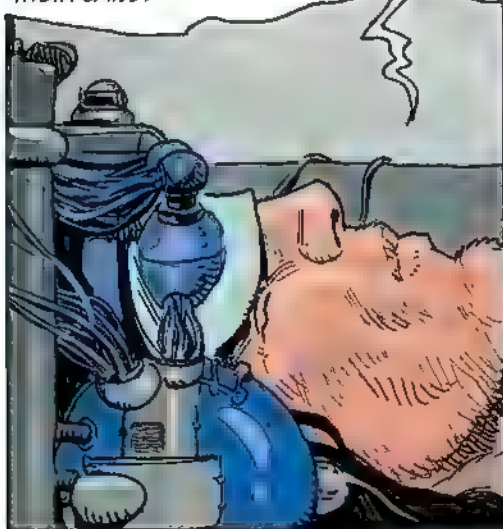


TAKE ALL FOUR OF THEM TO THE INTROSPECTOR. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING AND HEARING WHAT THEY CAN TELL US.



THEN, TIAGO, YOU WILL BE PUNISHED FOR YOUR TRANSGRESSION.

THE MAN WHOSE SON I AM WAS CALLED VARTH. HE CAME FROM A DISTANT STAR TO WHICH PEOPLE FROM OUR WORLD HAD ESCAPED THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, AFTER A GREAT CATACLYSM RAVAGED THEIR LAND.



TOGETHER WITH A SMALL GROUP OF MEN AND WOMEN, HE'D COME BACK TO EARTH ON A SPACESHIP UNDER THE COMMAND OF XARGOS, WHOSE DAUGHTER HAYNEE WAS VARTH'S WIFE.

VARTH'S SON!... AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!... IT CAN'T BE!



QUIET! LET'S HEAR THE REST.

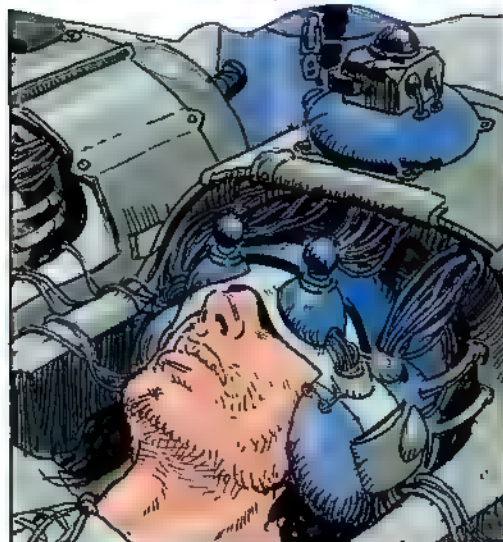
VARTH, HAYNEE AND SOME OF THE SURVIVORS BUILT A BOAT TO ESCAPE THE ISLAND. IN THE MIDDLE OF A RAGING STORM, HAYNEE GAVE BIRTH TO A LITTLE BOY. BELIEVING THE BOAT TO BE DOOMED, SHE PLACED THE BABY ON A RAFT AND ENTRUSTED HIM TO THE GODS OF THE SEA.



AS THEY NEARED OUR WORLD, VARTH SEIZED COMMAND, FORCING XARGOS TO LEAVE THE SHIP IN A SMALLER CRAFT. SOON AFTER, THOUGH, THE MAIN SHIP CRASHED ON AN ISOLATED ISLAND IN THE FROZEN SEAS.



THE BOAT DIDN'T SINK RIGHT AWAY, THOUGH. IT CROSSED THE GREAT WATERS BEFORE SMASHING ON REEFS IN SIGHT OF A NEW SHORE, THE LAND OF QA. ALL THOSE ON IT PERISHED, EXCEPT VARTH.

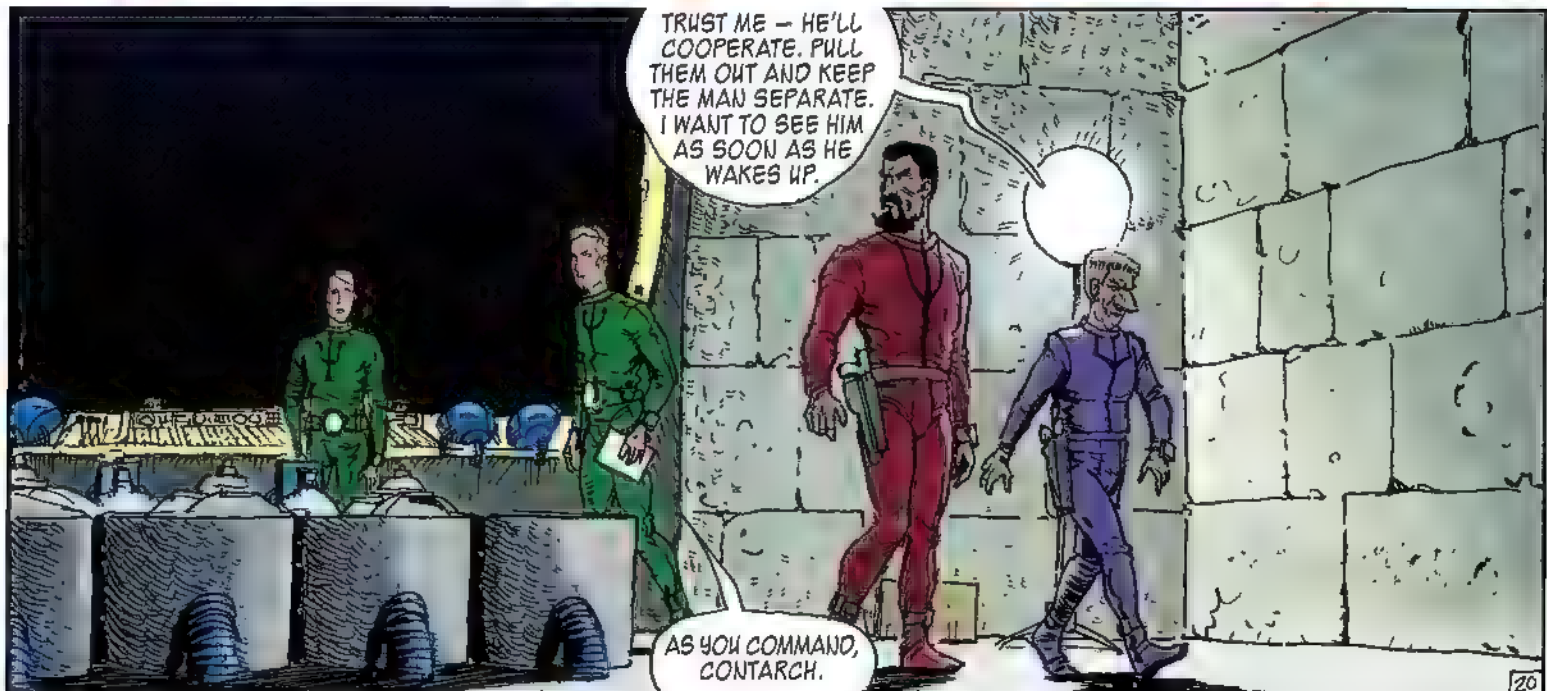
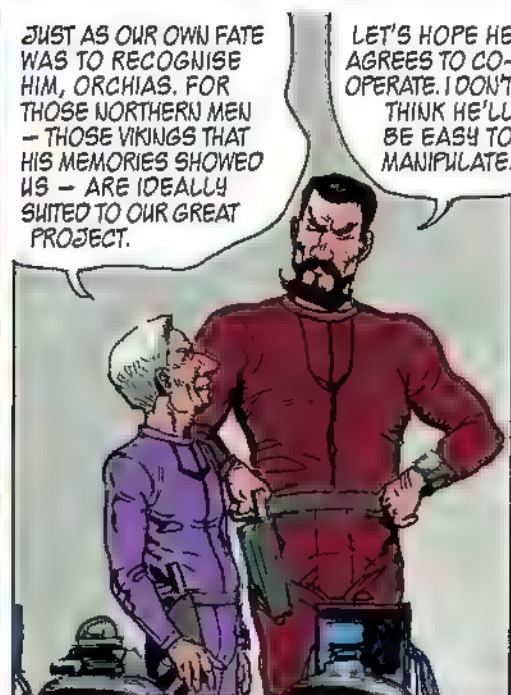
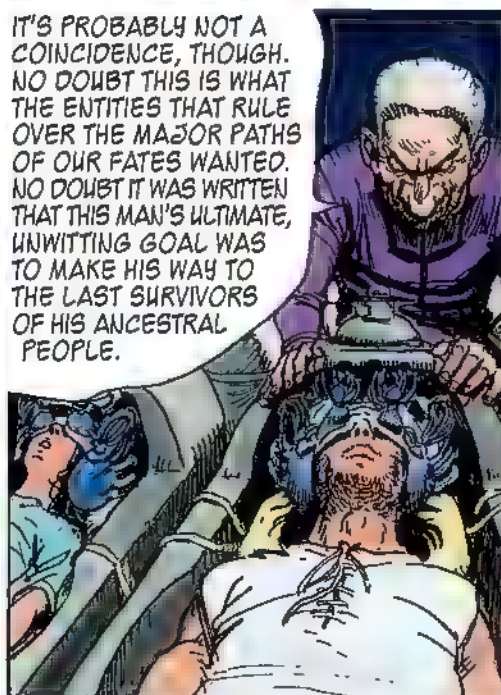
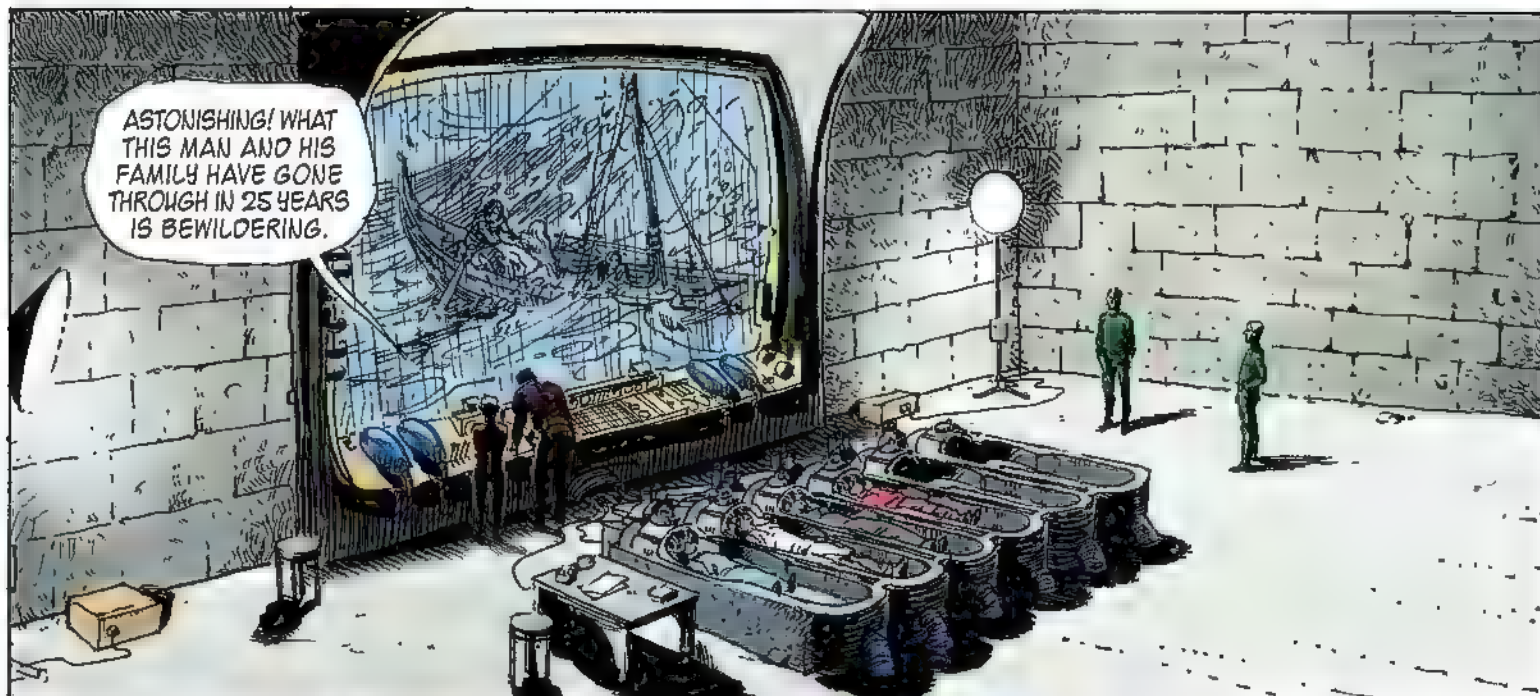


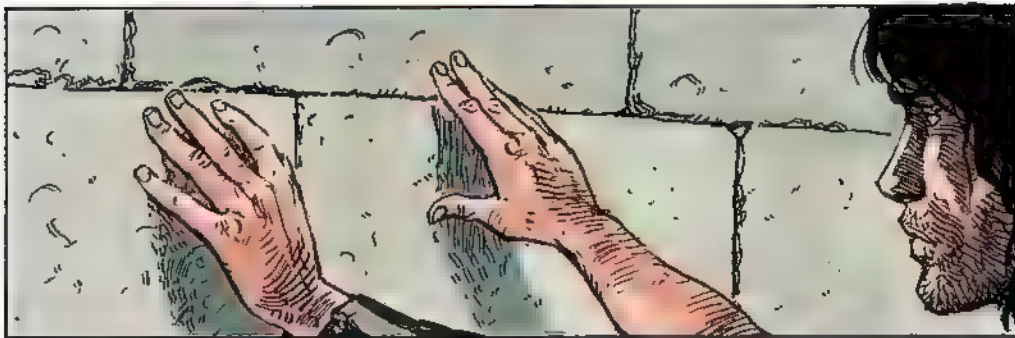
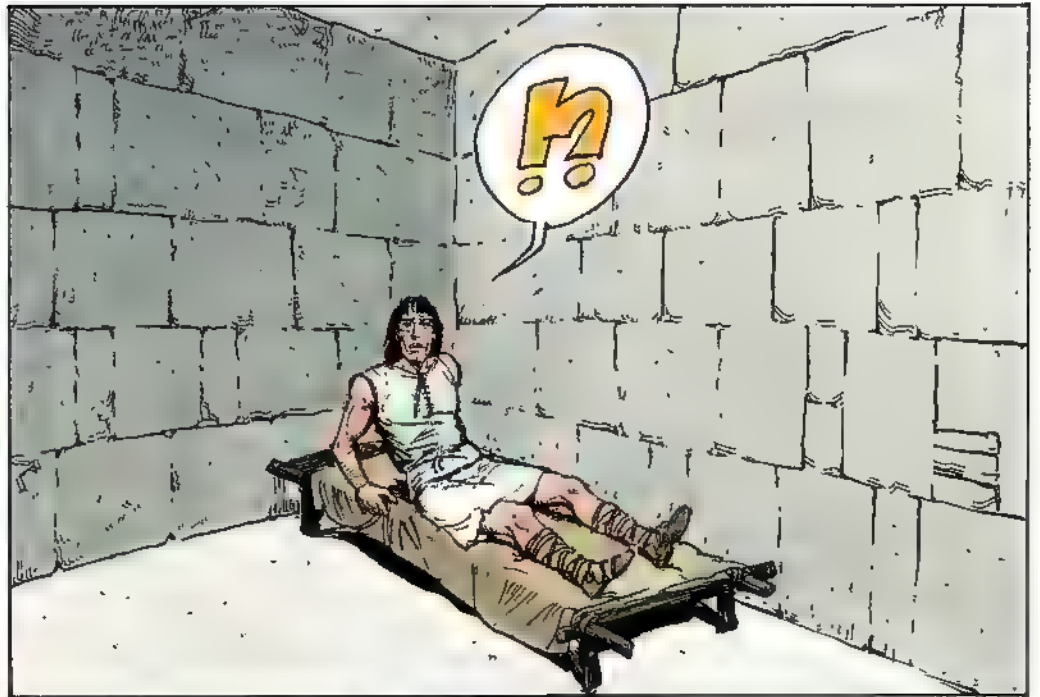
AS FOR THE BABY, HE WAS FOUND AND TAKEN IN BY LEIF HARALDSON, LEADER OF THE VIKINGS OF THE NORTH, WHO NAMED HIM THORGAL AEGIRSSON - SENT BY THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, AND SON OF THE GIANT AEGIR, MASTER OF THE SEA.

ACTIVATE THE MEMORY OF THE OTHER THREE. I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING.













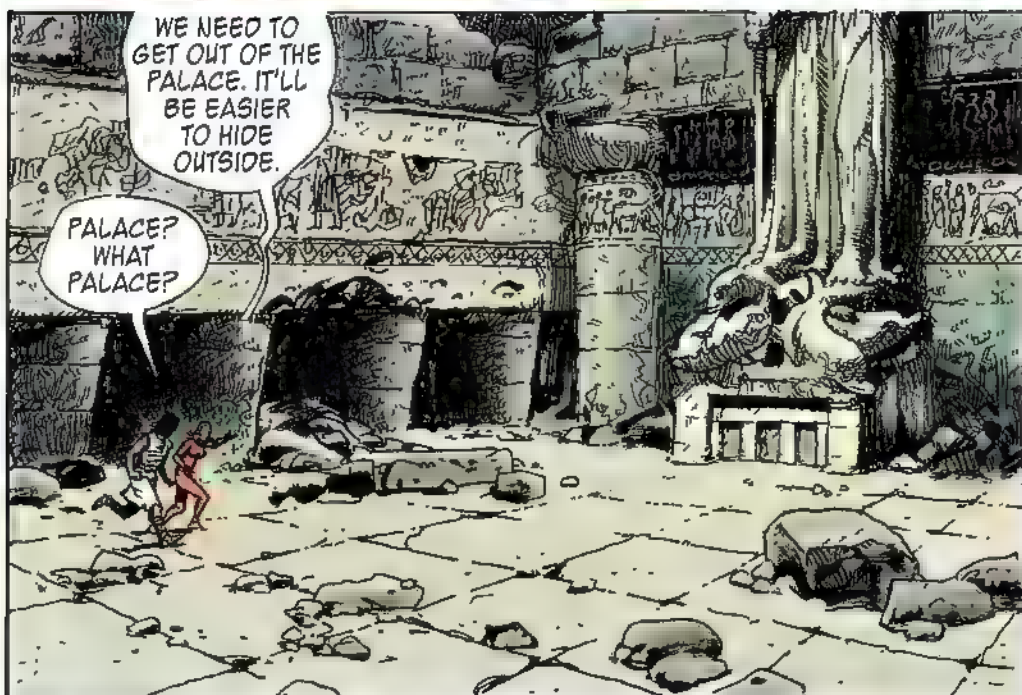
WHAT IS...?
WHO ARE
YOU?

SHHH...



WILL YOU
TELL ME...?

FOLLOW ME, AND
STOP ASKING
QUESTIONS.



WE NEED TO
GET OUT OF THE
PALACE. IT'LL
BE EASIER
TO HIDE
OUTSIDE.

PALACE?
WHAT PALACE?



I'LL EXPLAIN LATER.
LET'S HURRY... THOSE
TWO MORONS COULD
SHOW UP AT ANY
SECOND.



THIS WAS THE
SECRET EXIT
THAT THE CITY'S
GOVERNORS USED.
ONLY I KNOW OF
THIS PASSAGE.

CITY?...
GOVERNORS?...



BY OOH, YOU WILL
ANSWER ME THIS
TIME! WHERE
ARE WE?

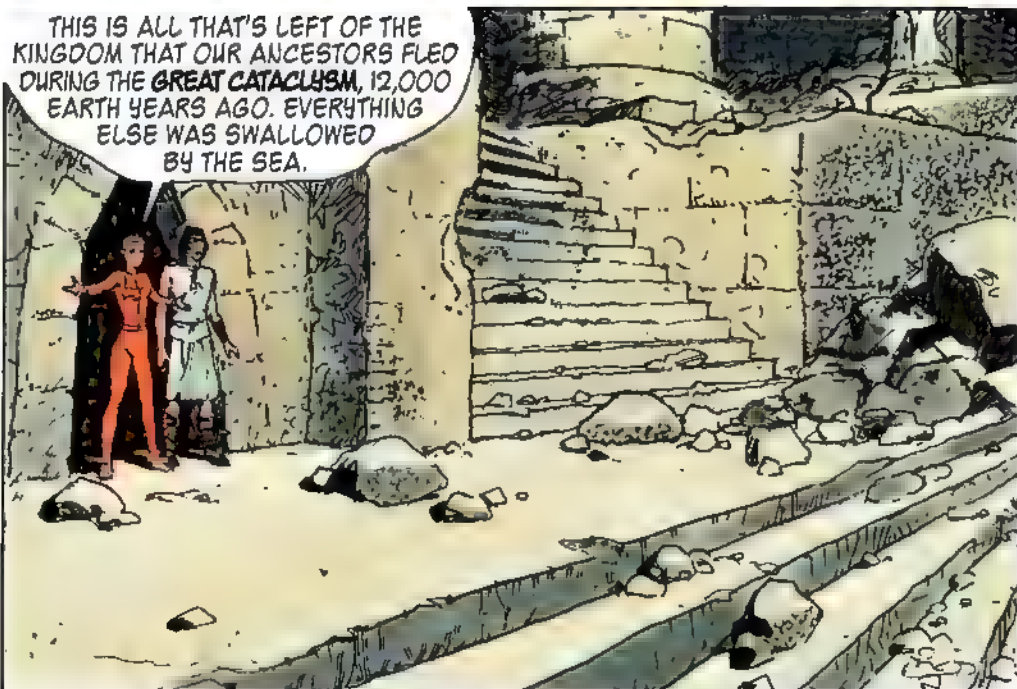
UNDER-
NEATH THE
MOUNTAIN.
LOOK...



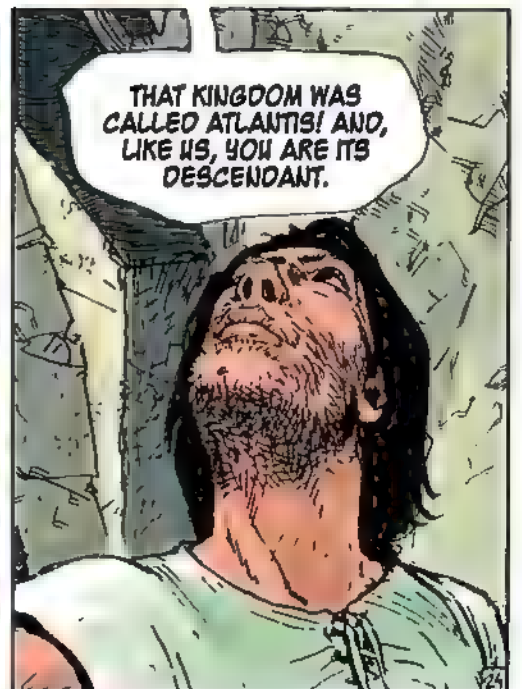
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THIS IS ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THE KINGDOM THAT OUR ANCESTORS FLED DURING THE GREAT CATACLYSM, 12,000 EARTH YEARS AGO. EVERYTHING ELSE WAS SWALLOWED BY THE SEA.



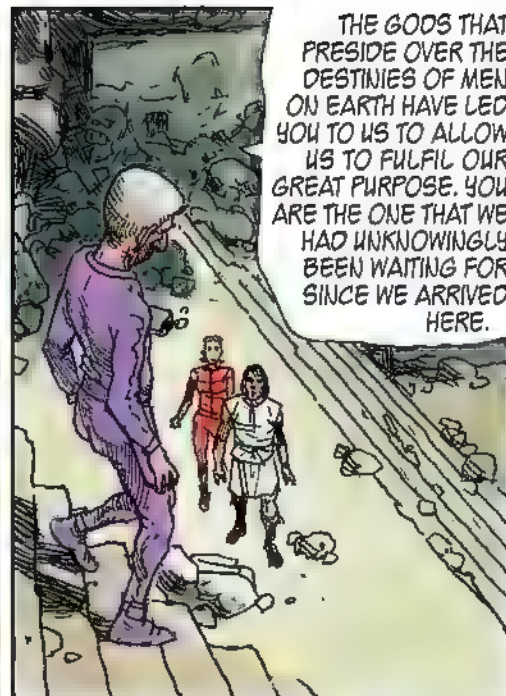
THAT KINGDOM WAS CALLED ATLANTIS! AND, LIKE US, YOU ARE ITS DESCENDANT.



YOU'RE ONE OF US, THORGAL. YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN. YOU ARE OF OUR RACE, OF OUR BLOOD. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM US.



THE GODS THAT PRESIDE OVER THE DESTINIES OF MEN ON EARTH HAVE LED US TO ALLOW US TO FULFIL OUR GREAT PURPOSE. YOU ARE THE ONE THAT WE HAD UNKNOWNLY BEEN WAITING FOR SINCE WE ARRIVED HERE.

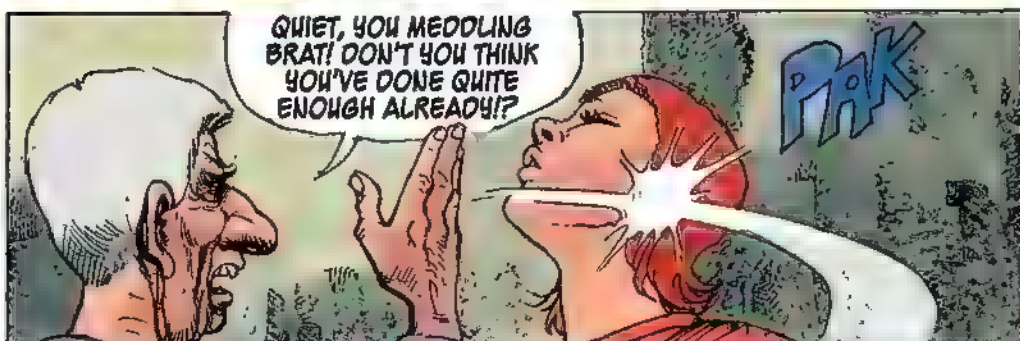


LEGEND HAS IT THAT ATLANTEANS ARE DESCENDED FROM POSEIDON, GOD OF THE SEAS AND OCEANS. WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT THEY WERE A RACE INFINITELY SUPERIOR TO THE PRIMITIVE BEINGS WHO PEOPLED THE EARTH BACK THEN.



DON'T LISTEN TO HIM. HE'LL—

QUIET, YOU MEDDLING BRAT! DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE DONE QUITE ENOUGH ALREADY?!



ONCE MORE YOU DESERVE TO BE SEVERELY PUNISHED. BUT OUT OF CONSIDERATION FOR OUR GUEST, I WILL TURN A BLIND EYE AGAIN.



YOU EVIL BRUTE! SENTENCING TIAGO TO THE LABYRINTH IS ENOUGH FOR YOU, IS THAT IT?

GO BACK UP TO THE VILLAGE IMMEDIATELY, ILENIYA. THAT'S AN ORDER!



YOU DON'T KNOW IT YET, THORGAL, BUT MY BROTHER RISKS DEATH FOR THE CRIME OF SAVING YOUR LITTLE GIRL'S LIFE IN THE DESERT.



ATLANTIS, THORGAL! A LEGENDARY KINGDOM THE SIZE OF A CONTINENT! AN EXTRAORDINARY CIVILISATION THAT WAS, CULTURALLY AND SCIENTIFICALLY, THOUSANDS OF YEARS AHEAD OF THE REST OF THE WORLD AT THE TIME!...

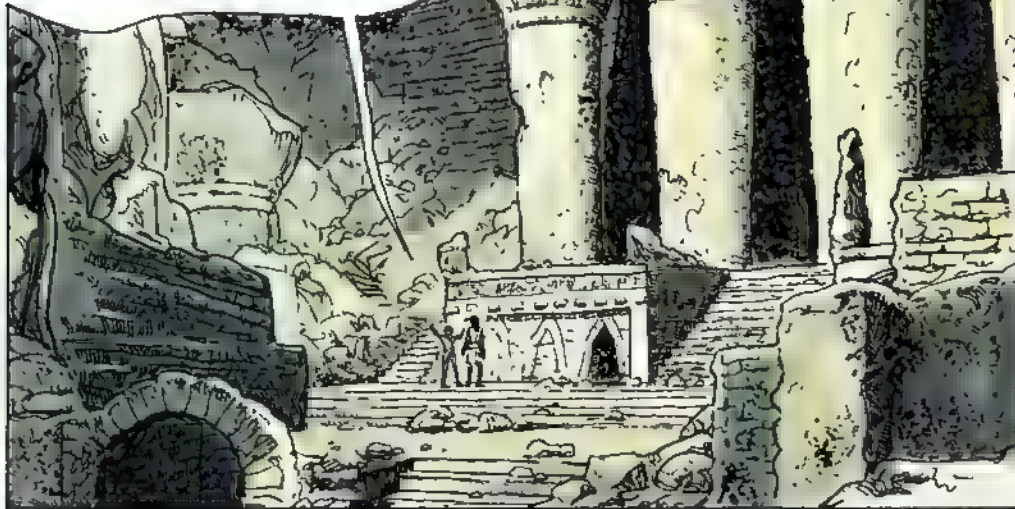


WHAT DID SHE MEAN?

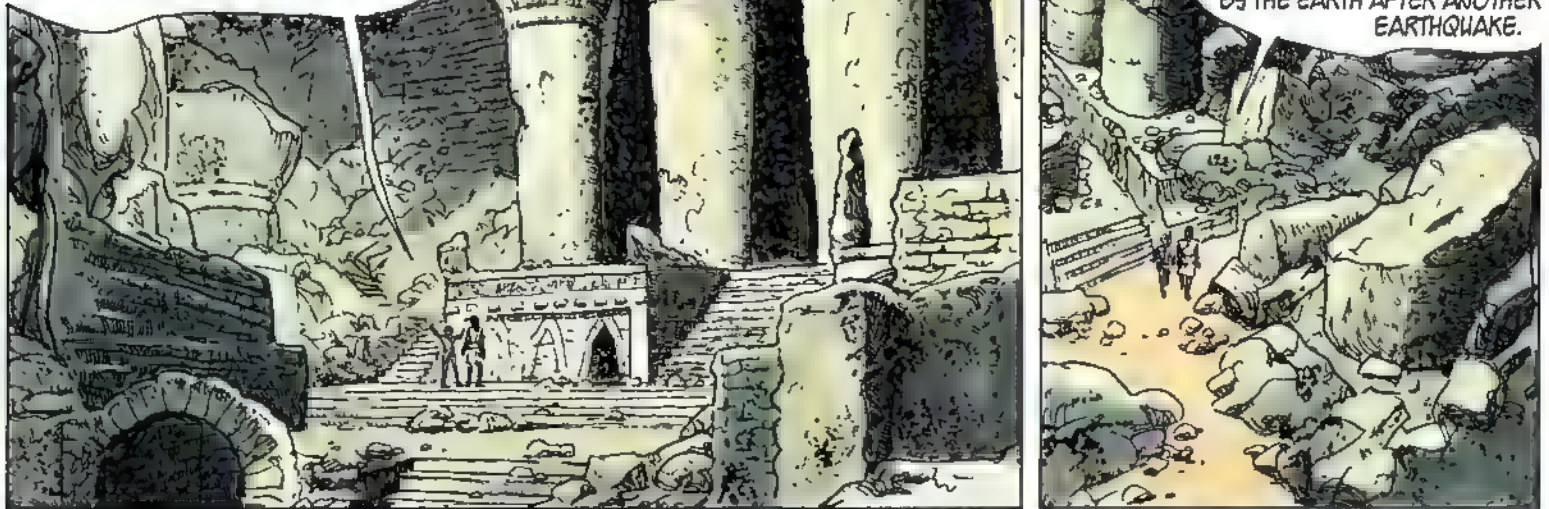


NOTHING. SHE'S A FANATIC — A BIT MAD SOMETIMES. I'M SURE A WARRIOR SUCH AS YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT I MUST IMPOSE A MINIMUM OF DISCIPLINE WITHIN MY LITTLE COMMUNITY.

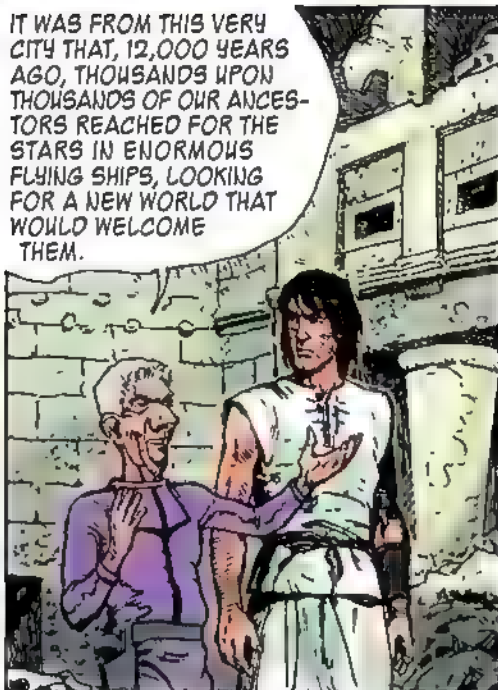
ALAS. IN A SINGLE, TRAGIC NIGHT, THIS MAGNIFICENT CIVILISATION SUDDENLY SANK BENEATH THE RAGING OCEAN. AS IF POSEIDON, FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, HAD DECIDED TO CRUELLY PUNISH HIS CHILDREN.



ONLY A HANDFUL OF PLACES ON THE EDGES OF THE KINGDOM WERE SPARED. SUCH AS THE CITY WHERE WE'RE STANDING, ARCHEOPOLIS, WHICH WAS LATER SWALLOWED BY THE EARTH AFTER ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE.



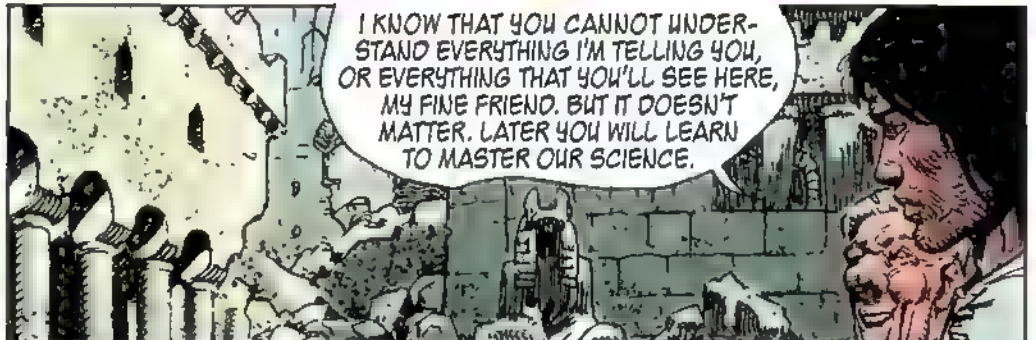
IT WAS FROM THIS VERY CITY THAT, 12,000 YEARS AGO, THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF OUR ANCESTORS REACHED FOR THE STARS IN ENORMOUS FLYING SHIPS, LOOKING FOR A NEW WORLD THAT WOULD WELCOME THEM.



ON THAT WORLD, WHICH THEY FOUND FAR BEYOND THE LIMITS OF OUR GALAXY, THE ATLANTIAN PEOPLE LIVED IN HARMONY FOR 120 CENTURIES; FREE OF WAR OR UNREST, ENDLESSLY PUSHING THE LIMITS OF THE KNOWLEDGE BROUGHT BY THE ORIGINAL SETTLERS.



I KNOW THAT YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING I'M TELLING YOU, OR EVERYTHING THAT YOU'LL SEE HERE, MY FINE FRIEND. BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER. LATER YOU WILL LEARN TO MASTER OUR SCIENCE.



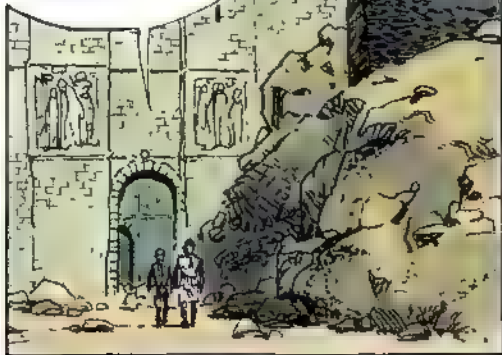
UNFORTUNATELY, THE ENERGY RESERVES OF OUR ADOPTED PLANET CAME TO BE DEPLETED. THE EXPEDITION CAPTAINED BY XARGOS, YOUR GRANDFATHER, WAS SENT TO EARTH IN SEARCH OF NEW SOURCES.



HEARING NOTHING FROM THEM, WE LAUNCHED OTHER SHIPS TO LOOK FOR THEM. BUT ALL WERE LOST IN SPACE WITHOUT REACHING THEIR GOAL. IT'S ONLY THANKS TO YOU THAT WE FINALLY KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO XARGOS'S EXPEDITION. BUT WE HAVE LEARNED OF THIS TOO LATE.



THE SHIP I COM-
MANDED WAS THE
LAST TO LEAVE OUR
WORLD. WITH NO
POWER LEFT, OUR
HOME IS NOW NO
MORE THAN A DEAD
PLANET, DOOMED
TO DRIFT AMONG
THE INFINITY OF
SPACE FOR ALL
ETERNITY.

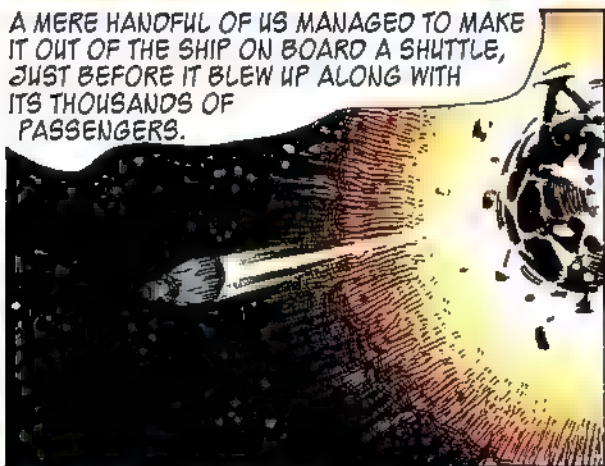


THERE WERE THOUSANDS
OF US ABOARD THAT VESSEL.
THOUSANDS OF MEN, WOMEN
AND CHILDREN ESCAPING
FROM A DEAD WORLD SO
THAT ATLANTIAN CIVILI-
SATION WOULD BE REBORN
ON ITS ANCESTRAL
HOME.

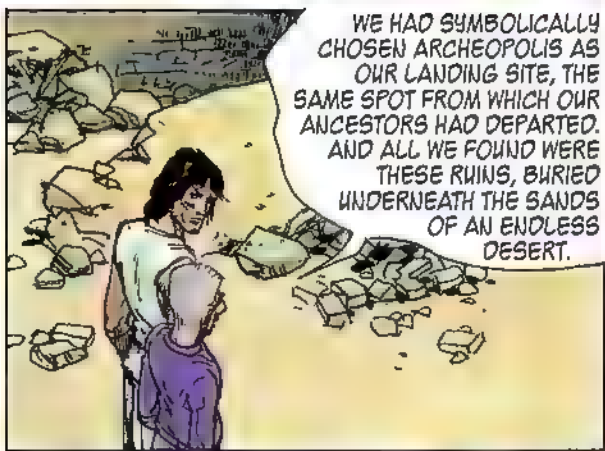


BUT AS WE NEARED
EARTH,
THE SHIP WAS CAUGHT IN A METEOR
SHOWER - INCANDESCENT TRAILS
OF SPACE DEBRIS THAT LITTERS
THE UNIVERSE.

A MERE HANDFUL OF US MANAGED TO MAKE
IT OUT OF THE SHIP ON BOARD A SHUTTLE,
JUST BEFORE IT BLEW UP ALONG WITH
ITS THOUSANDS OF
PASSENGERS.



WE HAD SYMBOLICALLY
CHOSEN ARCHEOPOLIS AS
OUR LANDING SITE, THE
SAME SPOT FROM WHICH OUR
ANCESTORS HAD DEPARTED.
AND ALL WE FOUND WERE
THESE RUINS, BURIED
UNDERNEATH THE SANDS
OF AN ENDLESS
DESERT.

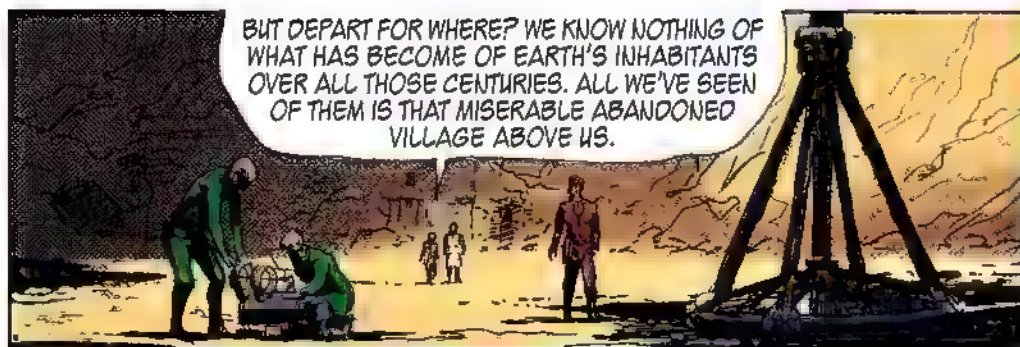


THAT WAS A YEAR
AGO. OUR SHUTTLE
TOOK SERIOUS DAMAGE
ON LANDING, BUT
WE SUCCEEDED IN
REPAIRING IT, AND
WE'RE READY TO
DEPART AGAIN.

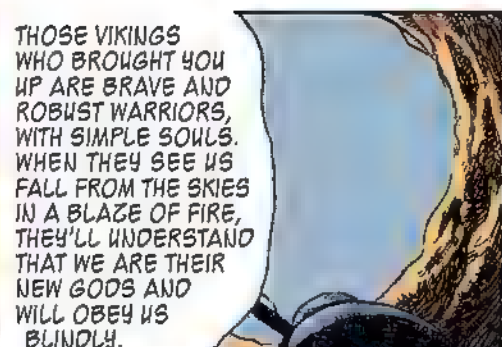


DEPART SO THAT IN
THE NAME OF ALL OUR
PEOPLE WHO DIED IN THE
COLDNESS OF SPACE,
HUMANITY'S SUPERIOR
RACE MAY ONCE MORE
REIGN OVER EARTH!





BUT DEPART FOR WHERE? WE KNOW NOTHING OF WHAT HAS BECOME OF EARTH'S INHABITANTS OVER ALL THOSE CENTURIES. ALL WE'VE SEEN OF THEM IS THAT MISERABLE ABANDONED VILLAGE ABOVE US.



THOSE VIKINGS WHO BROUGHT YOU UP ARE BRAVE AND ROBUST WARRIORS, WITH SIMPLE SOULS. WHEN THEY SEE US FALL FROM THE SKIES IN A BLAZE OF FIRE, THEY'LL UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE THEIR NEW GODS AND WILL OBEY US BLINDLY.

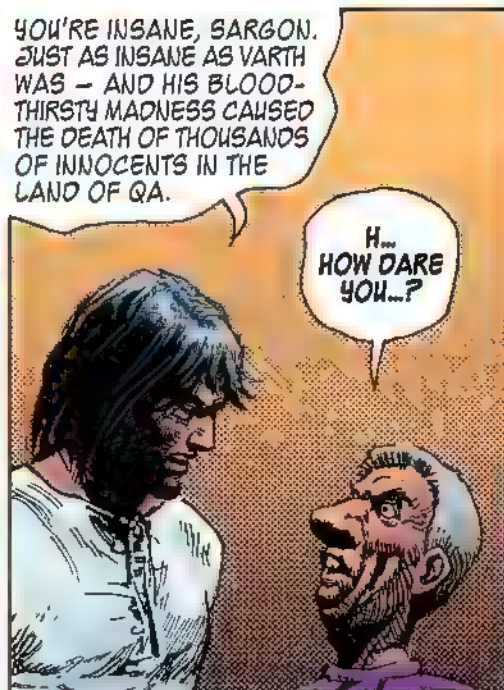


BUT THEN YOU CAME, THORGAL. AS IT HAD BEEN WRITTEN IN OUR DESTINY. YOU, THE CHILD OF THE STARS, WHO WILL GUIDE THE LAST SURVIVORS OF YOUR PEOPLE.



WITH THEIR STRENGTH AND OUR SCIENCE, WE WILL CONQUER VAST, RICH TERRITORIES. AND WE, THE ATLANTEANS, WILL ONCE AGAIN BE THE MASTERS OF THE WORLD!!

THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT...



YOU'RE INSANE, SARGON. JUST AS INSANE AS VARTH WAS - AND HIS BLOOD-THIRSTY MADNESS CAUSED THE DEATH OF THOUSANDS OF INNOCENTS IN THE LAND OF QA.

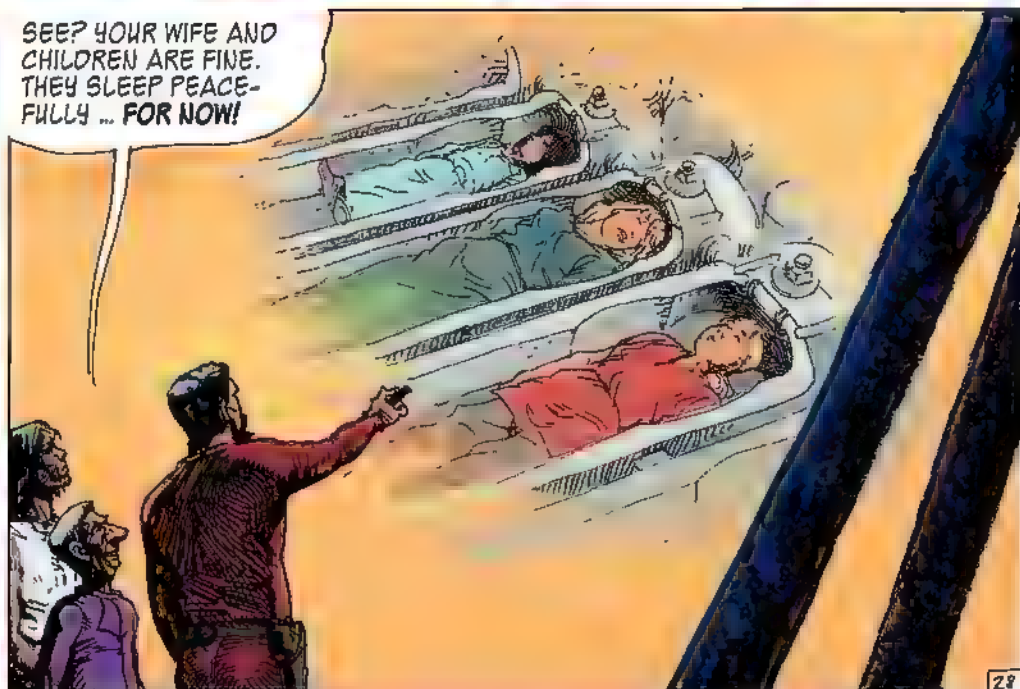
H... HOW DARE YOU...?



I WAS BORN TO VARTH AND HAYNEE, THAT'S TRUE. BUT I AM NOT OF YOUR RACE. NOT THE WAY YOU UNDERSTAND IT ANYWAY. I ONLY WISH TO BE A MAN LIKE ALL OTHERS - AND A FREE MAN!

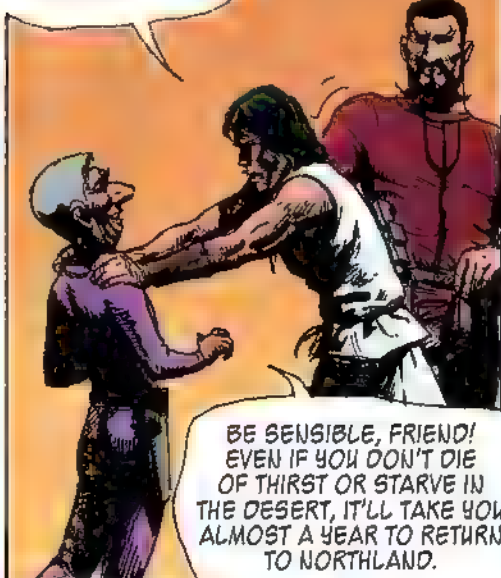


I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION, THORGAL. ORCHIAS, SHOW HIM...



SEE? YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN ARE FINE. THEY SLEEP PEACEFULLY ... FOR NOW!

YOU MISERABLE...!
GIVE THEM BACK TO
ME SO WE CAN LEAVE
THIS CURSED PLACE!



BE SENSIBLE, FRIEND!
EVEN IF YOU DON'T DIE
OF THIRST OR STARVE IN
THE DESERT, IT'LL TAKE YOU
ALMOST A YEAR TO RETURN
TO NORTHLAND.

WHEREAS WITH
OUR SHUTTLE,
WE'LL BE THERE
IN A FEW
HOURS.



YOU ONLY WANT TO
USE YOUR SCIENCE TO
ENSLAVE MEN, INSTEAD
OF OFFERING THEM ITS
BENEFITS. DON'T COUNT
ON ME TO HELP YOU!

THIS MAN IS DANGEROUS,
CONTARCH. WE HAVE HIS
MEMORIES AND KNOW WHERE
TO FIND THOSE VIKINGS
OF HIS. LET'S GET RID
OF HIM.

NOT YET,
ORCHIAS.

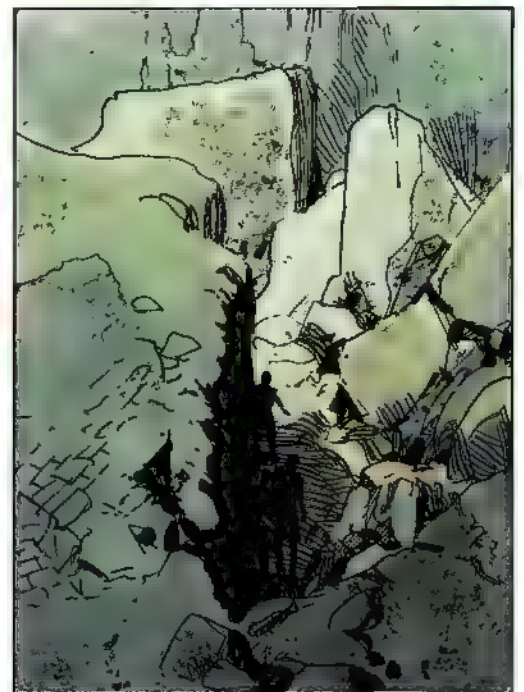
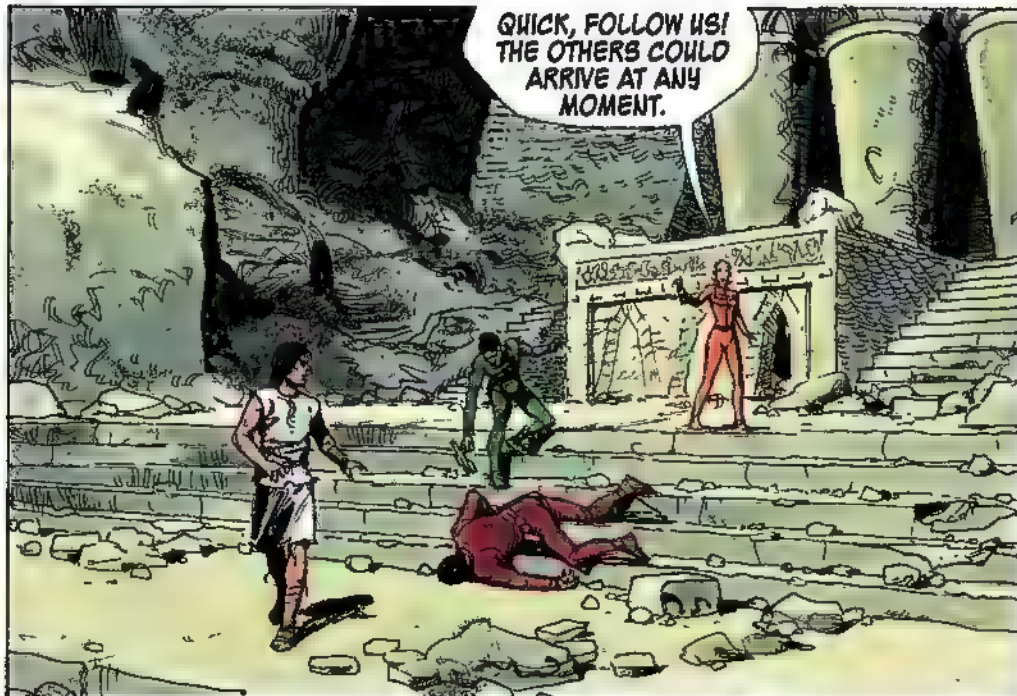


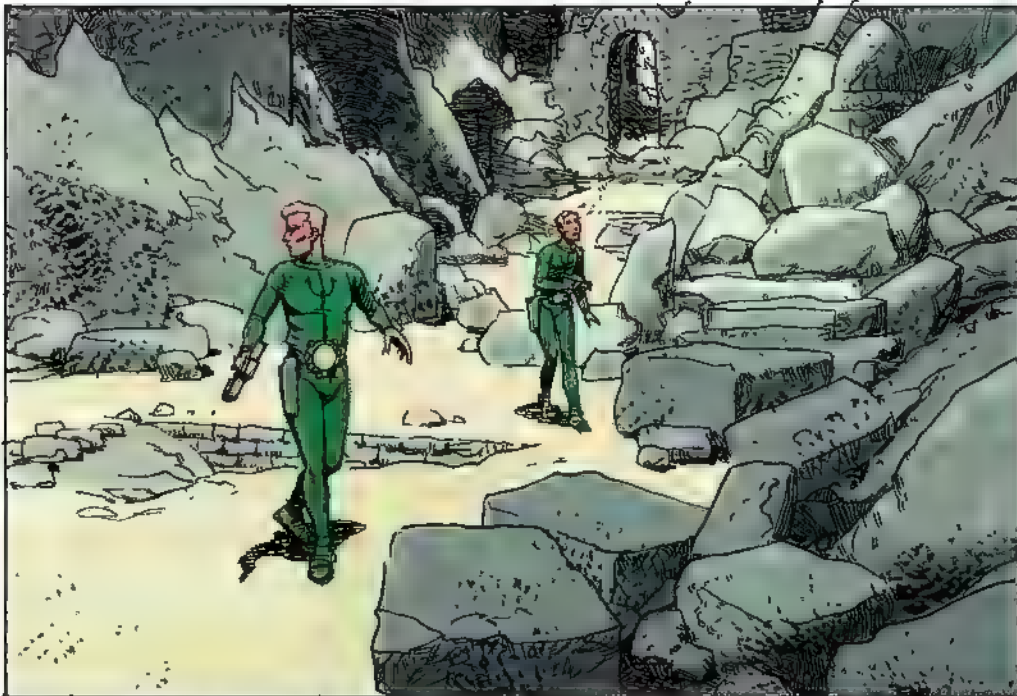
HE STILL HAS THINGS TO TELL US.
AND HE WILL, WHETHER HE LIKES IT
OR NOT. AFTERWARDS... TAKE HIM TO
THE INTROSPECTOR, ORCHIAS. AND
BE CAREFUL HE DOESN'T GIVE YOU
THE SLIP THIS TIME.



THAT'S A PITY. IF IT
WERE MY DECISION,
THIS PRIMITIVE BAR-
BARIAN WOULDN'T
LIVE ANOTHER
MINUTE.







WHY DIDN'T YOU USE YOUR WEAPON? YOU COULD EASILY HAVE SHOT THEM.

I... I'VE NEVER FIRED AT ANYONE.

CHRYSIOS HATES ALL VIOLENCE.

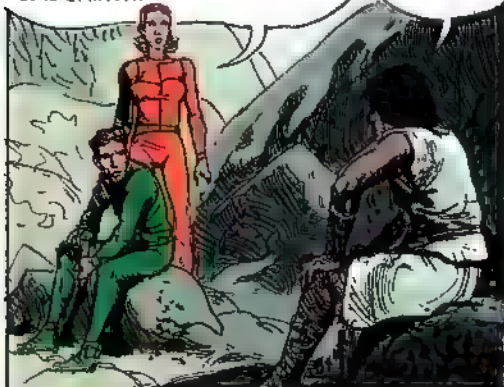
WE KNOW ALL ABOUT THE PLANS OF THAT MURDERER SARGON, AND WE ARE OF COURSE OPPOSED TO THEM. BUT UNTIL NOW WE WERE NEVER ABLE TO SHOW OUR TRUE FEELINGS TOO OVERTLY — NOT IF WE WANTED TO STAY ALIVE.



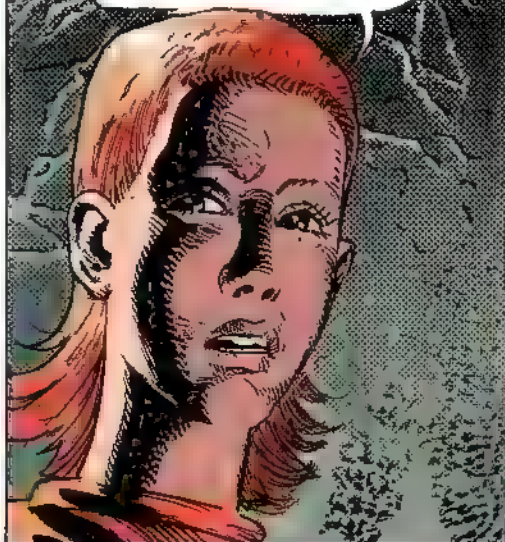
THE TERRIBLE THING IS THAT THE FEW OF US STILL HERE ARE WILLING TO FOLLOW HIM IN HIS DREAMS OF POWER AND CONQUEST.

BUT HE'S GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME. EVER SINCE WE ARRIVED, HE'S BEEN LOOKING FOR A PRETEXT TO GET RID OF TIAGO, FOR FEAR THAT MY BROTHER WOULD WANT TO AVENGE OUR FATHER'S MURDER AT SOME POINT. HE FOUND THAT PRETEXT TODAY, AND AN HOUR AGO TIAGO WAS CAST INTO THE LABYRINTH.

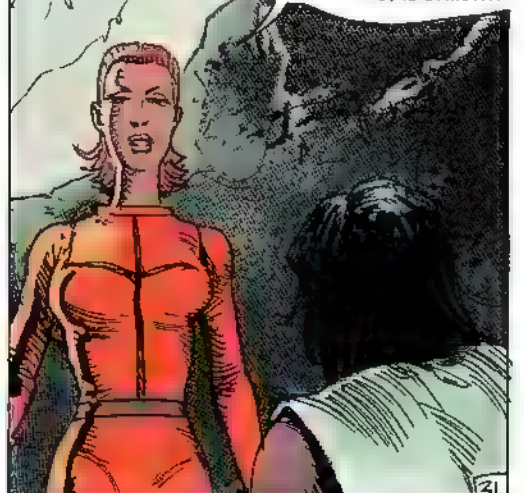
WHERE IS THAT LABYRINTH?



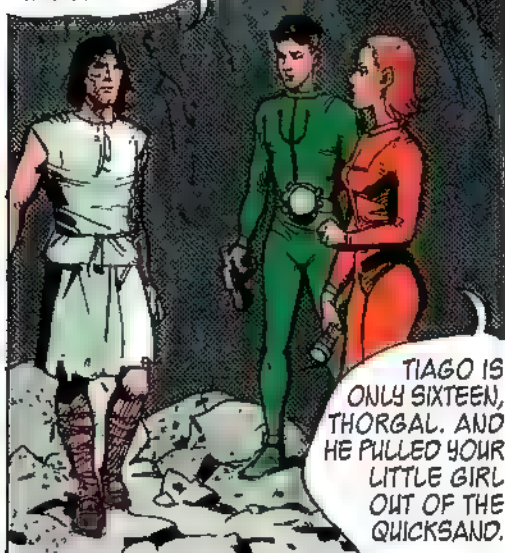
BELOW THE GREAT PALACE. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT'S INSIDE, BECAUSE THOSE THAT SARGON SENT IN NEVER CAME BACK.



THAT'S WHY CHRYSIOS AND I TOOK THE RISK OF TEARING YOU FROM THE CLUTCHES OF SARGON AND ORCHIAS — SO THAT YOU CAN RESCUE MY BROTHER FROM THE LABYRINTH.



WHY WOULD I DO THAT WHEN SARGON STILL HOLDS MY WIFE AND CHILDREN HOSTAGE?



TIAGO IS ONLY SIXTEEN, THORGAL. AND HE PULLED YOUR LITTLE GIRL OUT OF THE QUICKSAND.

IF CHRYSIOS LOVES YOU ENOUGH TO HELP YOU FREE ME, WHY CAN'T HE ALSO GO AND SAVE YOUR BROTHER?



CHRYSIOS ISN'T A WARRIOR LIKE YOU, THORGAL. HE'S A POET, NOT A FIGHTING MAN.

WHAT ILENIYA MEANS IS THAT I'M A COWARD. WHICH IS WHY, UNLIKE HER, I'VE ALWAYS PRETENDED TO ACCEPT SARGON'S AUTHORITY.



I SEE. GIVE ME THAT WEAPON YOU REFUSE TO USE.

I AGREE TO TRY AND SAVE YOUR BROTHER, ILENIYA. BUT **AFTER** ENSURING THAT AARICIA AND MY CHILDREN ARE SAFE. TAKE ME TO WHERE THOSE SARCOPHAGI ARE.

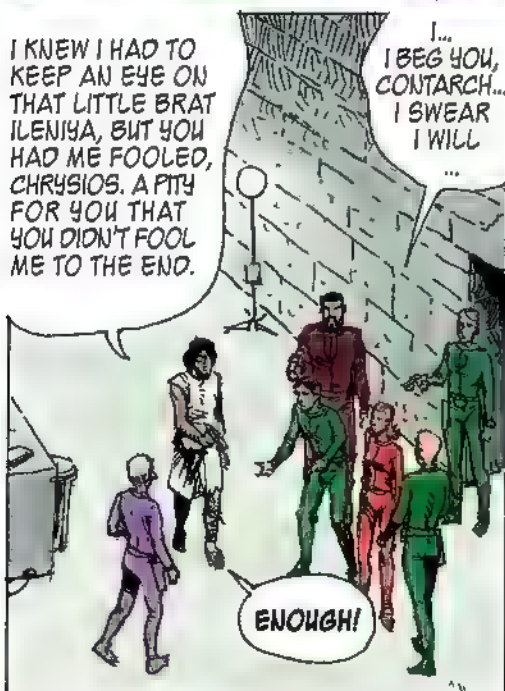
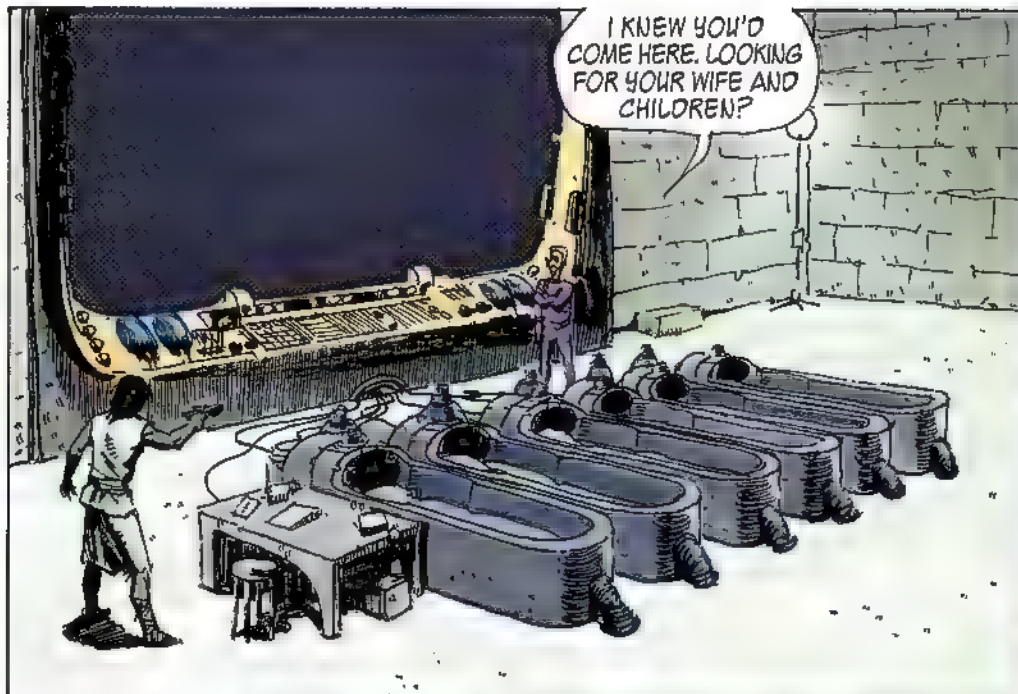


IT'S THERE, BEHIND THIS CURTAIN. THERE'S USUALLY A GUARD.

THEY MUST HAVE SENT ALL AVAILABLE MEN TO LOOK FOR US.



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IT'S SAID THAT THE GOVERNORS OF ARCHEOPOLIS WOULD CAST THOSE WHO BETRAYED THEM INTO IT. I'M MERELY KEEPING THE TRADITION ALIVE.



OF COURSE, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT DANGERS AWAIT YOU INSIDE. ALL I KNOW IS THAT NO ONE HAS EVER FOUND THE WAY OUT - ASSUMING THERE IS ONE! HA! HA!



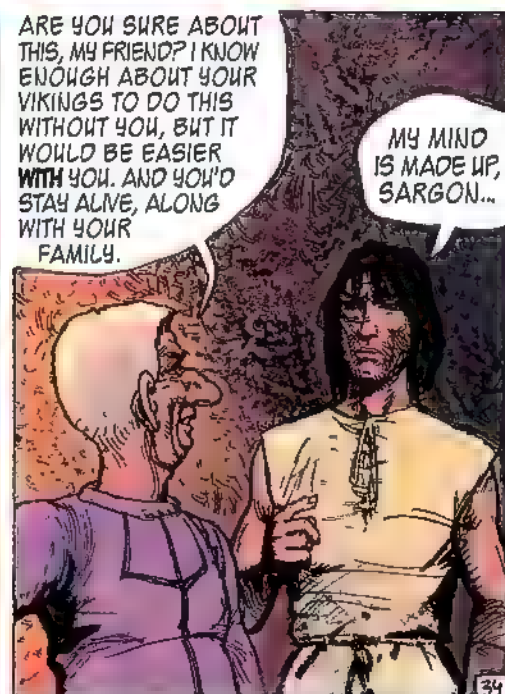
AS I TOLD YOU, THORGAL, HERE THEY ARE, WAITING NICELY FOR YOU. AND I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU SOME COMPANY.



NO! MERCY... NO...

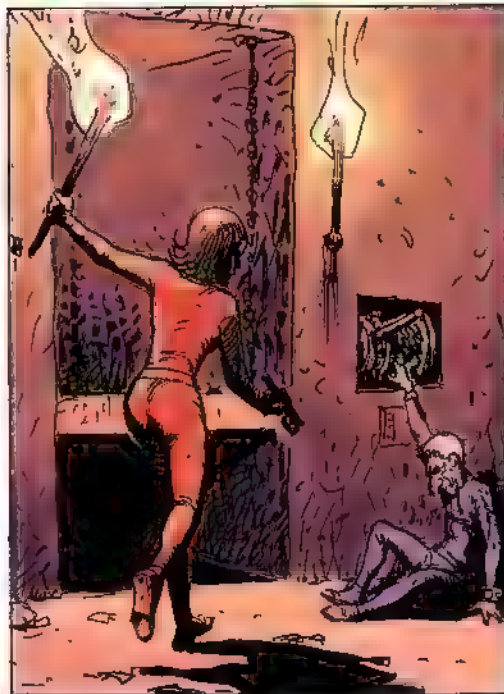
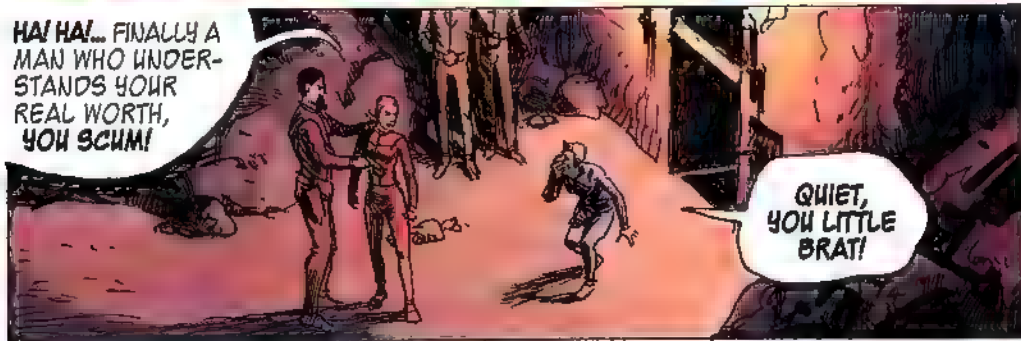
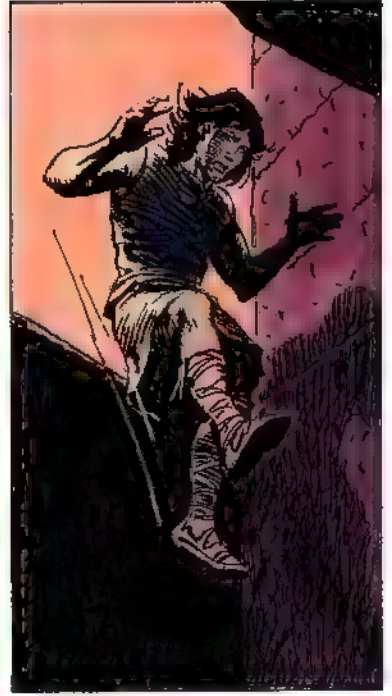


CHRYSIOS!



ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, MY FRIEND? I KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT YOUR VIKINGS TO DO THIS WITHOUT YOU, BUT IT WOULD BE EASIER WITH YOU. AND YOU'D STAY ALIVE, ALONG WITH YOUR FAMILY.

MY MIND IS MADE UP, SARGON...



ILENIYA!
YOU'RE
CRAZY
IF...

BOONGGGG

I'D RATHER
DIE WITH YOU
THAN LIVE
WITH THAT
SWINE.

WE HAVE TO
GET HER BACK
UP, ORCHIAS!
I DON'T WANT
TO LOSE HER.

YOU KNOW THAT'S IMPOS-
SIBLE. THE LABYRINTH'S
MECHANISM HAS ENGAGED.
THERE'S NOTHING WE
CAN DO FOR HER.

YOU PROBABLY MADE
A RASH DECISION,
BUT THANKS TO YOU
WE HAVE LIGHT.

LIGHT AND A
WEAPON. I'M JUST
SORRY I DIDN'T
MANAGE TO KILL
THAT MONSTER.

I'M GUESSING TRYING TO LEAVE
THE SAME WAY WE GOT IN WOULD
BE POINTLESS. WHICH LEAVES
US WITH ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY:
FINDING ANOTHER EXIT.

DO YOU THINK WE
HAVE A CHANCE?

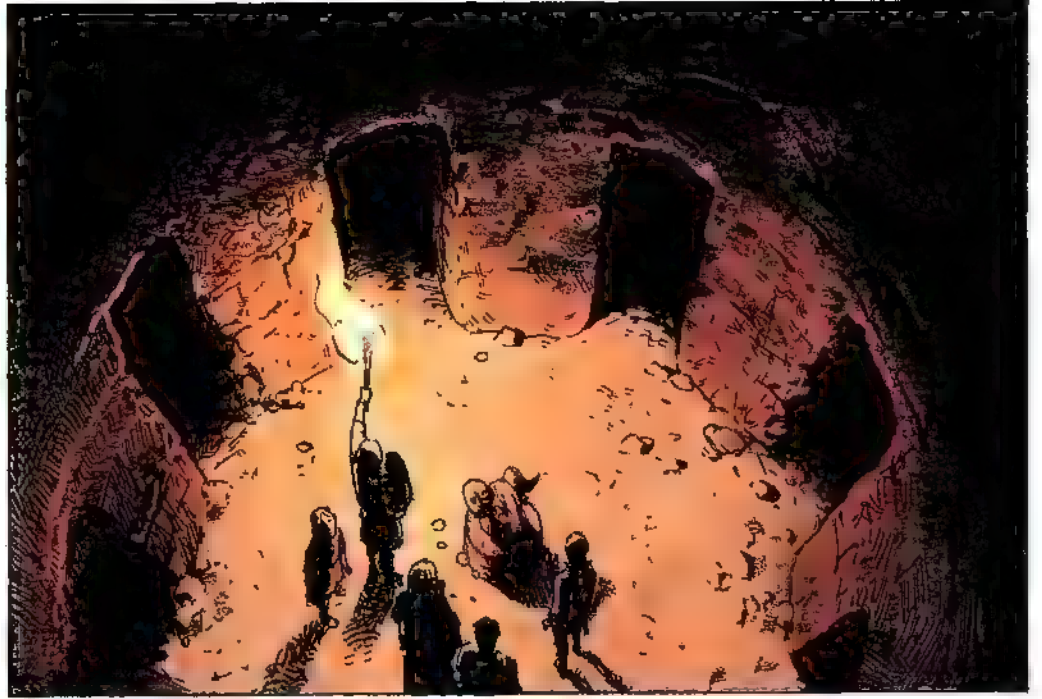
THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE AS
LONG AS WE'RE ALIVE. CAN YOU
EVER FORGIVE ME FOR LEADING
YOU INTO THIS TRAP?

I SHOULD
BE THE ONE
BEGGING FOR
FORGIVENESS...

IF I HADN'T OBEYED
SARGON'S ORDERS AND
BURNED YOUR BOAT...

LET'S PUT THAT
BEHIND US. WE
HAVE BETTER
THINGS TO DO
THAN EXCHANGE
REGRETS. THIS
TORCH WON'T
LIGHT OUR WAY
FOR EVER -
LET'S GO!

COME, SARGON. I'M GOING
TO HEAL YOUR WOUND AND
PREPARE THE SHUTTLE
FOR LAUNCH. NOW THAT
WE KNOW WHERE TO GO,
NOTHING'S KEEPING
US HERE.





IF WE'RE GOING TO DIE, WHY BOTHER FIGHTING? THIS SO-CALLED LABYRINTH IS NOTHING MORE THAN A PRISON WITH NO WAY OUT. THAT MUCH IS CLEAR.

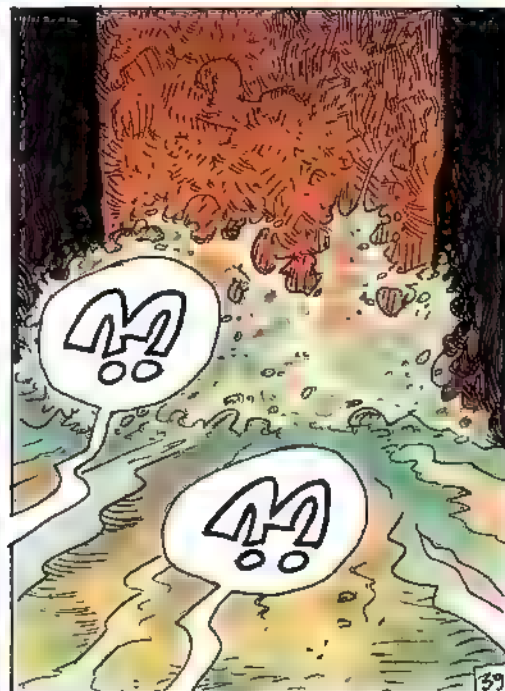
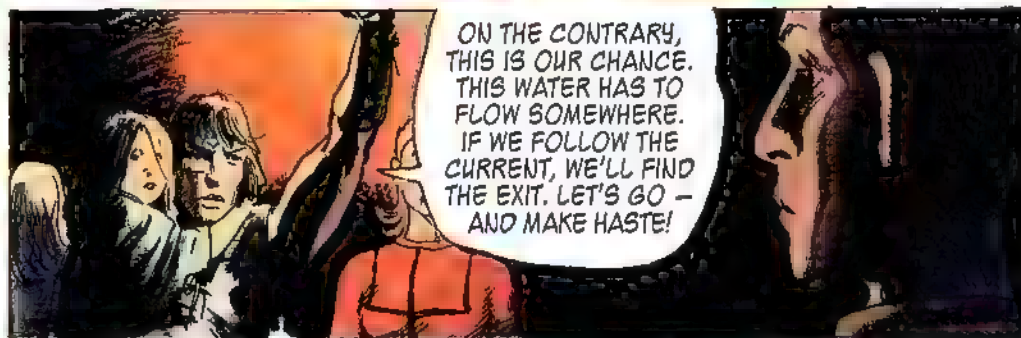
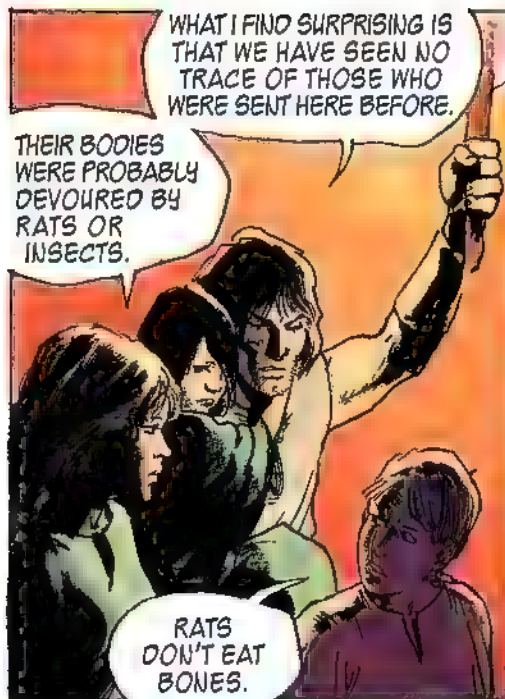
NO, LOOK... THIS RAM HAS A TWISTED HORN ON THE RIGHT. THE PREVIOUS ONE HAD IT ON THE LEFT.

PERHAPS THAT HORN SHOWS WHICH DIRECTION TO FOLLOW?...

I DOUBT WHOEVER BUILT THIS ACCURSED MAZE HAD ANY INTENTION OF MAKING THINGS EASY FOR US.

TIAGO!

UNLESS IT SHOWS WHICH DIRECTION NOT TO FOLLOW...



BACK! WE MUST
TURN BACK
QUICKLY
BEFORE—



STOP! THAT'S
EXACTLY WHAT THOSE
WHO DESIGNED THIS DEVIL-
ISH TRAP HOPED THEIR
VICTIMS WOULD DO.

IF WE DIDN'T FIND THE REMAINS OF
THOSE WHO PRECEDED US DOWN HERE, IT'S
BECAUSE THE WATER CARRIED THEM AWAY.
WHICH MEANS IT HAS TO DRAIN SOME-
WHERE. THIS WALL COULD BE A DOOR THAT
REMAINS LOCKED UNTIL THE CORRIDORS
OF THE LABYRINTH ARE FULLY FLOODED
AND THE PRESSURE IS SUFFICIENT
TO TRIGGER THE OPENING
MECHANISM.



AN INTERESTING
THEORY. WHAT
IF YOU'RE
WRONG?



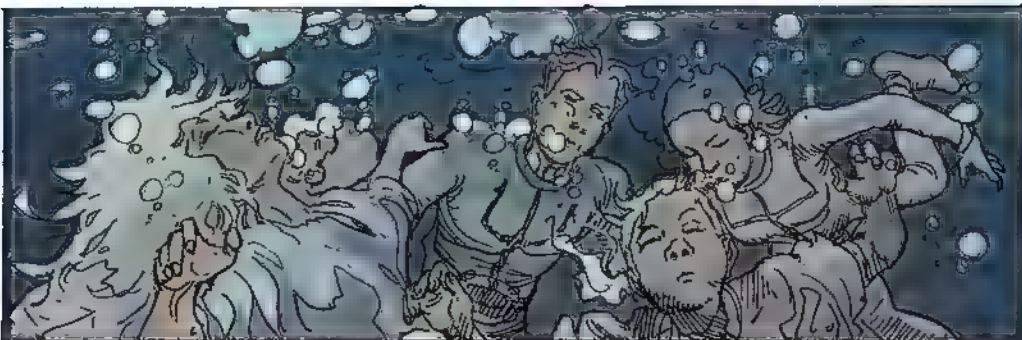
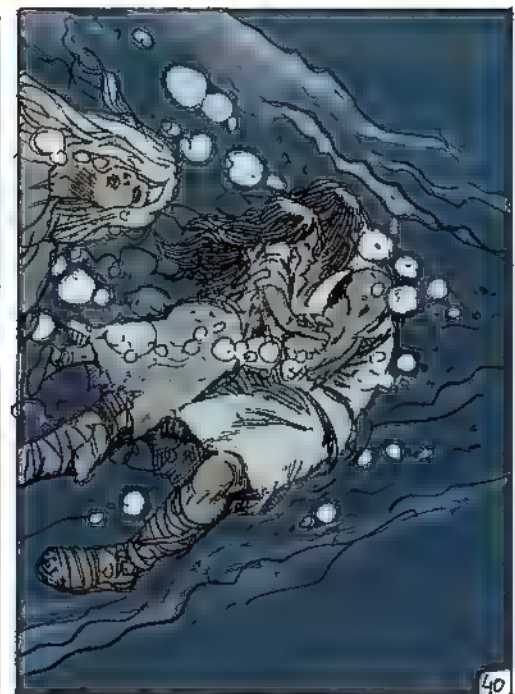
THEN WE'LL
DIE. WHICH WILL
HAPPEN TO US
ANYWAY IF WE
TURN BACK
NOW.

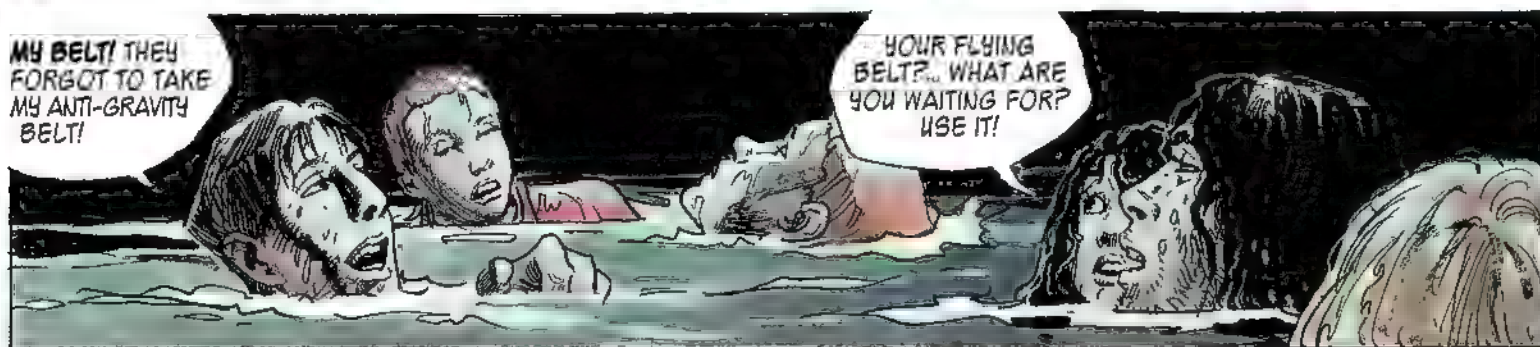
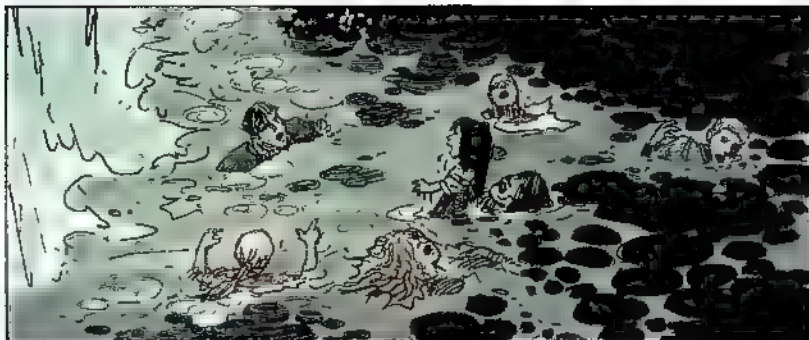


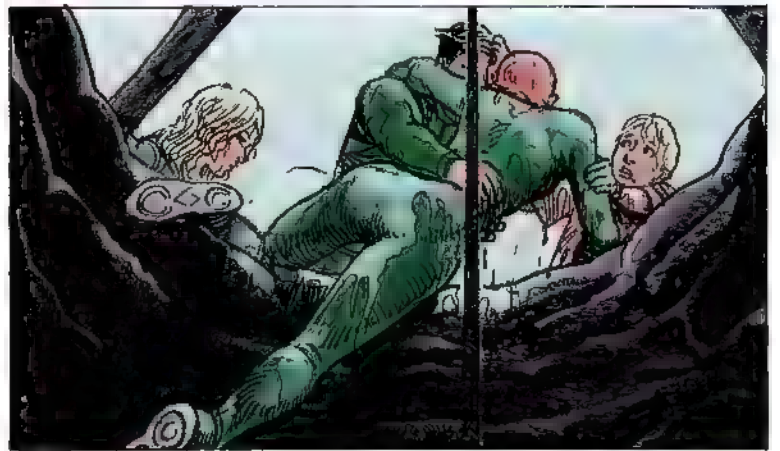
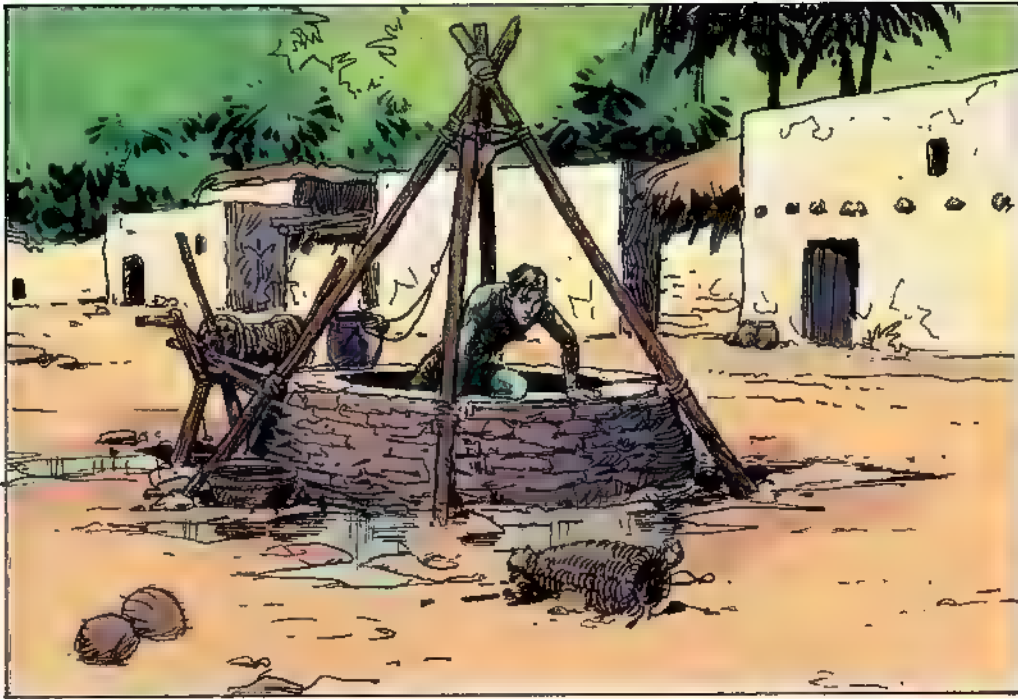
MAY MIGHTY ODIN
PROTECT US.



TAKE A DEEP,
DEEP BREATH
SWEETIE.
NOW!









WHAT IS THAT?

THE SHUTTLE!
THEY'VE STARTED
THE SHUTTLE'S
ENGINE!



THEY'RE GOING
TO LAUNCH IT OUT
OF THAT ANCIENT
VOLCANO'S
CRATER.

WE HAVE TO
STOP THEM.

HOW,
THOUGH?



LIFT-OFF
IN THREE
MINUTES...



IT'S SUCH A
PLEASURE TO
LEAVE THIS ROT-
TEN PLACE.

...TWO
MINUTES.



GIVE ME THE BELT
AND THE RAY
GUN, QUICK.

